

The Tempered Heart

By: lord of the land of fire

A terrible tragedy shatters Naruto's heart and he is forced into exile for his own safety. He is sent to a different world filled monsters and secrets. Will he find the strength to heal his heart? Tsu X Mok, Nar X Kur

Status: ongoing

Published: 2009-04-22

Updated: 2010-03-02

Words: 42539

Chapters: 20

Rated: Fiction M - Language: English - Genre: Drama/Romance -
Characters: Naruto U., Kurumu K. - Reviews: 1,422 - Favs: 1,600 -
Follows: 1,446

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5012481/1/The-Tempered-Heart>

Exported with the assistance of FicHub.net

The Tempered Heart

[Introduction](#)

[A terrible tragedy](#)

[Welcome to Youkai Academy](#)

[Not what they appear to be](#)

[Joining a club](#)

[A different uniform](#)

[A different sort of training](#)

[A prisoner](#)

[Arrests](#)

[Moka's plan](#)

[A long and painful night](#)

[In his room](#)

[A little bit of comfort](#)

[Special training](#)

[The festival:meeting mom and grandma](#)

[The festival:hearing opinions](#)

[The festival: Kyouko's visit](#)

[The festival: Destined One](#)

[The worst possible outcome](#)

[Hiatus](#)

[All hope](#)

A terrible tragedy

Author's Notes: I really need to learn how to turn down a challenge. This story is being written as a challenge from 'grumpywinter.'

now if only you did another NarutoxRosario vampire cross with Tsukune paired with Moka and Naruto paired with Kurumu or the snow girl in it

So here it is *another* story written because of a challenge.

The world was on fire! All around him the buildings burned and crumbled beneath his paws. A few ninja attacked him but were no match for his power. Screams filled the air as ordinary people ran for their very lives. He pulled his head back and roared. Blind hatred consumed him. He couldn't remember what it was that had sparked him all he knew was that he wanted to destroy! Opening his jaw he sent out a stream of fire. Fresh screams greeted him and his heart leapt in wicked satisfaction.

They had come here to rescue him. To retrieve their friend and teammate and bring him back home. But he had greeted them with contempt and indifference.

And with a sword in his hand.

"You don't understand Naruto," he'd said with that calm Uchiha certainty. "I could have killed you then, I spared you only on a whim. But this time, for a whim, I will end your life."

And in the blink of an eye Sasuke was standing in front of him with his sword. Naruto could have dodged but he deliberately chose not to. He had to believe that despite his words the bonds between them

were still there. That somehow they still mattered to Sasuke just as they always had to him and Sakura. So he stood his ground.

Sasuke did not hesitate and aimed for the heart.

"Sasuke no!" Sakura cried out and leapt into the way.

The sword stabbed into her chest and through. Her blood splattered onto Naruto's face and Sasuke's hands.

She was facing him, Sasuke, the boy she had loved once and still cared for. She looked into his red eyes and searched for something; regret, love, sorrow, anything.

But he looked into her dying face with only an impassive disinterest. "Goodbye Sakura." He yanked his sword out and leapt away.

Sasuke, she thought.

"SAKURA!" Naruto screamed and caught her as she fell back. Her blood was pouring out onto his jacket. "Sakura-chan! Sakura-chan! Hold on please!" Yamato and Sai were kneeling beside him as he held her in his arms. "Please help her!"

"She's the only medic nin here Naruto," Yamato said sadly. "And it wouldn't do any good, it's a fatal wound."

"I am sorry Naruto-kun," Sai said with his painful lack of expression.

"Na... ruto," Sakura whispered. "It's all right," she gently reached out and touched his cheek, wiping his tears. "Don't cry for me."

"You can't die Sakura-chan! Please! Please don't leave me!"

"I'm so... sorry Naruto, so sorry for so mu... much," she gasped and a trickle of blood came from her mouth. "Forgive me..."

"Sakura," he wept. "Everything, everything was forgiven a long time ago. I love you! I love you Sakura-chan!"

"I... love... you too. Naruto... he.... Sasuke, he's not worth... saving..." She gave a final gasp and as he watched the light left her eyes forever.

"Sakura! No, oh Sakura no! Please no! Sakura!" He held her close and held her.

"Ku, ku, ku what a touching scene," Orochimaru called out from the ruins above them. At his side were Kabuto and Sasuke who was calmly wiping the blood from his sword.

"Why are you crying Naruto?" Sasuke called down. "Do you think she would want you to dry over her?"

Naruto looked up at the calm figure of Sasuke cleaning his sword, wiping away Sakura's blood like it were some sort of filth. Sasuke who had become like a brother to him, for whom he had done *everything* over the last three years. "Why?" He called up in a shaky voice. "Why?!"

"I didn't mean to kill her, I meant to kill you. But what does it matter? You were all dead the moment you decided to come here."

"We came here for you Sasuke!!" He screamed. "Sakura-chan and I, all we wanted was to save you!"

He shook his head. "Then you were both fools. I told her the night I left the village and you at the valley of the end that it was too late, that I had made my choice. You should have listened."

"How can you say that?! You KILLED her Sasuke! Doesn't that mean anything to you?!"

"No, nothing at all. I told you Naruto I have severed all my bonds except for one. You and she are nothing to me."

Naruto stared up at him and felt the unbearable rage building inside. "You're right Sasuke; I never wanted to believe it until now. I believed

that the bonds we made could never be severed. That they were too strong for that. I believed that right up until the moment your sword went into her. Now I finally understand. You're right; the bonds between us are gone. You are not my brother, my teammate, or even my friend. All you are to me now is a traitor and an enemy."

Sasuke nodded approvingly. "It's good that you finally see the truth, I just wish it had come sooner."

"Me too." He gently laid Sakura down and stood up. He then took off the Hokage necklace and handed it to his sensei. "Yamato-sensei, Sai, please give this back to the Hokage and return Sakura for proper burial."

"Naruto what do you think you're doing?" His eyes widened. "You can't be thinking to use the fox again."

"Please get out of here sensei," he said calmly. "I don't want you or Sai hurt."

"Naruto..."

"Please go now!" he growled. His eyes had become red and the red chakra was seeping out of him.

Sasuke smirked. "That won't work Naruto."

Sasuke found himself standing in a sewer before a cage with a seal on it. "So you are the Kyuubi," he said calmly.

Behind the cage two eyes opened and teeth smiled down. " **An Uchiha with the vile sharingan. It is long since time you and your cursed clan became extinct.**"

"Don't bother with threats," he said idly. "You can do nothing to me."

" **Oh I'm not the one you need to fear.**"

And before he could respond Sasuke felt pain stabbing through his back. His chest exploded as a hand with a rasengan forced its way out of him.

"Burn in hell you traitor." Naruto spoke from behind.

Without warning Sasuke staggered and collapsed.

"Sasuke-kun! What's wrong?" Orochimaru cried out. "Kabuto!"

"Yes Lord," Kabuto hurriedly examined him.

In his mindscape Sasuke vanished in a puff of smoke. "Arrogant bastard did he think he could come into my mind and control me?"

" He could have had he not been forced to use the sharingan's power to limit me." The fox chuckled. **"You do know he's not dead right?"**

He will be in a minute," Naruto said.

The fox laughed. **" He nearly kills you and you forgive him. He kills the female and suddenly you're hungry for his blood."**

"Shut up! Sakura wasn't just anyone! She was the girl I cared about! And I'll never forgive him for killing her!" Naruto looked at the fox. "I want power! Lots of it! I'm killing Not only Sasuke but Orochimaru and Kabuto too! Give me all the power I can stand!"

The fox roared with laughter. **"Done."**

Yamato felt the power surging through Naruto and knew instantly there was only one thing for him to do. He scooped up Sakura and fled. "Sai run!"

"But Naruto-kun?" His teammate was now covered in red chakra.

"There's nothing we can do now! If we stay we die!"

Regretfully Sai fled and followed his captain.

As Naruto transformed he lost all conscious thought or control. As before when he had turned to four tails.

Only this time he didn't stop at four.

Naruto opened his weary eyes. "Where?" he felt exhausted and sore.

"Naruto you're awake! Thank kami!" A familiar voice cried.

"Nice to have you back kid."

Naruto turned his head to see Tsunade and Jiraiya both sitting next to a small bed. He recognized where he was immediately. "How'd I wind up in the hospital?"

"Yamato brought you here after... after you were done." Tsunade said uncomfortably.

"What's the last thing you remember kid?" Jiraiya asked.

"Sakura," he said weakly. "Sasuke killed Sakura."

"Do you remember anything after that?" Tsunade asked gently.

Naruto tried to think. "No, nothing. What happened?"

He saw baachan and ero-sennin look at one another nervously. "Don't worry about that for now," Tsunade said. "For the time being you just rest and recover your strength. We'll talk later. And here, Yamato said you wanted him to give this to me for some reason." She held out her necklace to him.

Naruto stared at him with a painful expression on his face. "I can't accept that."

"Why ever not?"

"Because it wouldn't be safe, the curse would get me since I'm not going to be Hokage anymore."

"What?" They both gasped.

"What the hell are you talking about kid?" Jiraiya demanded. "Since when are you giving up on your dream?"

"Since I failed to save Sasuke," he answered quietly. "Someone who can't even save his best friend has no business becoming Hokage."

"Naruto that's..." Jiraiya began but Tsunade put a hand on his arm and gave him a wary look.

"We'll talk about this later," she said.

"Baachan, before you go I need to know one thing, please."

"What is it Naruto?"

"Did I kill him? Did I kill Sasuke?"

Tsunade looked at him and slowly nodded. "Yes, you did."

He leaned back in his bed and shut his eyes. "Good."

The two Sannin shared another wary look before quietly leaving the room. Out in the corridor no less than ten ANBU stood guard. Given all the death threats they'd received from both within and outside Konoha security was exceedingly tight.

Returning to the Tower the protesters were still there keeping it under siege. There had to be at least three or four thousand of them. All of them demanding the same thing.

Naruto's execution.

Inside the Tower a haggard looking Shizune was waiting for her. With her spending most of the last two weeks in the hospital by Naruto's side Shizune had been left to try and deal with the mounting fury. She told her apprentice that Naruto was finally awake which brought a momentary smile to Shizune's face. The happiness was too short lived as she was forced to bring the Hokage up to speed.

"The representatives from Iwa, Kiri, and Kumo are demanding another audience with you." Shizune told her.

"They can go to hell!" Tsunade said angrily. "How dare they come in here and *demand* I put Naruto to death!"

"They say that if you don't comply then they will go to war with us," Jiraiya said quietly.

"Temari, the ambassador from Suna was here too and she repeats the Kazekage's promise that Suna will support us if we're attacked."

"Well that's good and I appreciate it, but I'd rather not plunge the whole continent into another Great Ninja War." Tsunade said. She reached into her desk for a bottle only to see it was gone.

Shizune frowned. "I've gotten rid of all the hidden alcohol in this office. You need to be sober Lady Tsunade, now more than ever."

"Wrong, I need a drink now more than ever."

Grinning Jiraiya produced a small metal flask and handed it over. "Here you go."

Tsunade accepted it with an eager grin. "Thanks, I take back almost all the bad things I said about you." She took a healthy swig before turning back to a disapproving Shizune. "All right, what else do you have?"

"Danzou is trying to pass a resolution through the Council to have Naruto forcibly inducted into the ANBU for, 'proper training and indoctrination.'"

Tsunade snorted. "By which he really means brainwashing."

"He hasn't gotten enough votes yet but he is close and working very hard on the remaining members." Shizune said.

"I don't give a damn how many votes he gets. I run this village not the Council. What else do you have?"

"We received another petition to have Naruto executed; this one has over twenty thousand votes and was put forward by the merchant guilds."

"This aint a democracy and it's not up for a vote!"

"Since all the other countries but Wind have begun a trade embargo the guilds are suffering."

"If they try anything with Naruto they'll suffer a hell of a lot more. What else?"

"The ANBU have foiled four more attempts on Naruto's life including one by a nurse who was trying to poison him."

That news made Tsunade turn pale. Since becoming Hokage she had worked closely with the staff there. She trusted those people! If some of them wanted to kill Naruto... "Who was it?"

"Lady Tsunade?"

"Which nurse tried to poison him?"

"Rinko," she said sadly.

Tsunade closed her eyes. "Damn it, she's been there more than a decade and I really liked her."

"What do you want done with her?"

"Same thing that's done with all the people making attempts."

"But..."

"Shizune, I can't play favorites about this."

"I... suppose you can't," she admitted.

"What else?" Tsunade asked and took another drink from the flask.

"We... we've received a message from the leader of Akatsuki."

"What?" Jiraiya said. "Their leader Pein contacted us? What about?"
He still knew next to nothing about the mysterious leader of Akatsuki.

"He... he says that if we will hand over Naruto to his organization he will guarantee his safety and sign an alliance and non-aggression pact with us."

"Liar! Sure they'll keep him safe! The way they did Gaara and the other jinchuuriki's they've captured. Does he really think me so stupid?" She tried drinking again and found the flask now empty.
"What else is there?"

"Those cover the major events," Shizune said.

Tsunade nodded. "All right, thank you, I want to talk with the pervert here alone so no calls and no visitors. As soon as Shizune had left the office she turned to Jiraiya. "What the hell am I supposed to do?! How do I protect Naruto when I have three of the great powers, the council, and most of my own village screaming for his blood? How did we get in this position?"

"We're here because Naruto lost control of himself and unleashed **eight** in order to kill Sasuke, Orochimaru, and Kabuto." Jiraiya sighed. "If he'd stopped there everything would be just fine. But he didn't."

"From what you've told me the fox would have been fully in control at that point, so I don't suppose he had much choice."

"I don't imagine that's much comfort to all the dead Grass ninja and civilians."

Tsunade had nothing to say to that. After killing three traitors who more than deserved to die the fox had not been satisfied and had attacked the nearby village hidden in the Grass.

And destroyed it.

Over thirty thousand civilian dead along with about six hundred Grass ninja who had died defending their village. When the news had got out that the Kyuubi had done that *everyone* had started screaming that Naruto was too dangerous to be left alive. She was faced with the very real possibility of armed invasion by three of the powers and had to use her ninja to put down riots in Konoha's streets. The assassination attempts here mounting and she felt her authority was being slowly torn from her hands.

"What do I do?" She asked again.

Jiraiya looked at her and spoke with grim certainty. "You have to send him away."

"Jiraiya! How can you..."

"I don't like it anymore than you do damn it!" He said sharply cutting her off. "But we need to face facts; you *can't* keep him here much longer. If you do the village will explode. The other villages really will start a war or you'll be overthrown by Danzou and the Council or one of the assassination attempts will work. For his sake as well as the village's he can't stay."

Though it broke her heart Tsunade knew he was right, there was just no other way to keep him safe. "Where will he send him? Do you want him to travel with you again?"

Jiraiya regretfully shook his head. "I can't keep him with me. I have to investigate Akatsuki and having him with me would only put him in even greater danger."

"Where can we send him then? Where will he be safe?"

"I know a place," Jiraiya said. "It's hidden way in another dimension and almost impossible to reach."

"Another dimension?" She asked dubiously.

"There's more than one world Tsunade, and more than one existence." Jiraiya said. "The great sage told more of other dimensions. One earth, but an infinite number of alternate variations of that single earth. In one of these there exists a special hidden place that might actually be able to help Naruto gain control over the fox. I've helped him as far as I could, obviously it wasn't enough."

"Will he be safe in this, 'other dimension'?"

"Safer than if he stays here."

She stared at him sadly. "Will he be able to come back?"

"Of course! Once it's safe for him to do so. Though given the way things are right now that may be years."

How did it come to this? Damn you Sasuke for what you've done, to him and to Sakura. "All right, we'll send him away until we can recall him. What is this place called?"

"Youkai Academy."

Welcome to Youkai Academy

He was the only one riding on the big yellow contraption called a 'school bus.' The only other person was the driver, an odd fellow with a cigar in his mouth and strangely glowing eyes. He was looking out at the bizarre light that seemed to be dancing all around. He was dressed in a green school uniform and beside him on the seat was a large duffel bag with his clothes and possessions. Jiraiya had packed it for him. He hadn't been allowed to return to his apartment before leaving. For his own security *no one* had been allowed to know he was going. He hadn't even gotten the chance to say goodbye to anyone, not even Kakashi or Iruka.

Flashback

Lying in the hospital bed but feeling much stronger He had been handed a manila folder by ero-sennin. Baachan was there and looked pained.

"What's this?" He had asked.

"Just take a look at it kid." Jiraiya had said. The expression on his face was as serious as he'd ever seen.

Curious Naruto opened the folder to see it was filled with black and white photos. They looked like pictures from some place that had been a battlefield. What he saw was photo after photo of destruction. Buildings gutted by fire or reduced to rubble, hunks of twisted metal, whole rows of body bags and bodies covered with bloodied blankets. "What is this? I don't get it?"

"Just keep going kid."

Naruto did so, looking at more pictures of this unnamed ruined city. Then he saw a photo that caught all his attention and made him

gasp. It was of a gigantic paw print that had been pressed into a paved road that had to be at least thirty feet across. He looked up at Jiraiya, his face pale and his hands beginning to shake. "Did I... did I do this?"

"The Kyuubi did it Naruto, not you." Tsunade answered quietly.

"But I let him out," Naruto whispered.

Jiraiya hated to do it but he told Naruto to keep going through the pictures as he explained. Naruto learned that what he was looking at were the ruins of Kusa. Jiraiya told him about the thirty thousand dead and everything else that had happened in the two weeks since. The threats from other nations, the embargo, the protests, the maneuvers from the Council, the assassination attempts, he didn't try to down play any of it. He painted the picture as black as it was.

Not all the pictures were of Kusa. He saw the crowds that were protesting at the Tower. The pictures were good enough for him to read several of the signs being carried. Just as when he was a kid the people of his own village wanted him dead. There were pictures of crowds rioting in the streets and being arrested by ANBU and regular ninja.

"I hate to say this kid, I really do, but if you stay here the village will tear itself apart." Jiraiya said quietly.

"And you wouldn't be safe Naruto," Tsunade said. "There have already been over a hundred attempts on your life that we know of and only kami knows how many more plots are out there. The Council is doing everything it can to hamper and oppose me. It's very likely they will try to depose me before too long. If I thought I could protect you I would, but I can't." She looked away from him and continued on. "The only thing I can do to protect you is send you somewhere far, far away."

Naruto surprised both of them by calmly nodding his head and accepting her judgment without any argument. "I understand," he

said quietly and closed the folder.

"Naruto... I..." she struggled to get the words out.

He smiled at her with that big smile of his. "It's all right baachan, I really do understand. I'll do what's best for the village and for my precious people, even if that means leaving them. So please don't cry for me."

Somehow his understanding had the opposite effect, causing her to cry even more.

Staring out at the strange lights Naruto was trying to figure out what to do with this feeling that seemed to be consuming him. It was a feeling he'd been familiar with since childhood, and one he'd always fought against. At least until now.

The feeling was despair. And for the first time in his entire life he completely surrendered to it. Always before, even in the worst of times, he'd held on to hope by promising himself he would make his dreams come true one day. He would become Hokage and have people respect him and acknowledge him. He would bring Sasuke back to the village and save him. He would fulfill his promise to Sakura.

All those dreams were gone now. As dead as Sasuke. As dead as Sakura. As dead as all those innocent people that Kyuubi... no that **he** had killed. All hope was gone. He was never going home again. Tsunade and Jiriaya had both sworn to him he would be able to return some day, though it would be years. He didn't believe it. After what he had done the *only* way he could guarantee his village's safety was to never return.

What hurt him most was realizing that all those people who had hated him when he was growing up. The ones who'd called him demon and monster and tried to kill him or drive him away. In the end *they* had been proved right. It turned out he was every bit the

monster they always thought, and every bit as dangerous. All his dreams of becoming a great ninja and a hero had turned out to be nothing but his own personal delusion.

For a moment he wondered what he was now. He was going to a whole other world that didn't have ninja and where people couldn't use chakra. He had no mission; all he had to do was live his life until the time came to return. Which it never would. Tied to his belt was gamachan, filled to bursting with precious gems and gold coins. Ryu notes would just be pretty paper where he was going so baachan had given him a fortune in gems and gold, paid for by the village treasury. Ero-sennin had put sealed scrolls into his back pack with hundreds of jutsus he could learn.

But... was a ninja without a mission really a ninja anymore? He didn't think so. So if he wasn't a ninja what was he now?

"Young man," he bus driver called.

"Yeah?"

"You know it's very unusual for transfer students to arrive during the school year. It's already two weeks into the second semester. You'll have to do a lot of hard work to catch up."

"Whatever," he muttered dully.

"You should be careful; Youkai academy can be a very scary place."

That actually made him laugh.

Not long after they finally exited the tunnel of light. The bus came to a halt in a desolate spot with a weird scarecrow. "Please be careful exiting the bus. Welcome to Youkai Academy, I hope you survive the experience."

"Gee thanks," he said as he shouldered his duffel bag and stepped off the bus.

As the bus pulled away he saw what he assumed to be the academy maybe two miles away. It was on a cliff overlooking the sea and looked a lot more like a gothic castle than a school. He was relieved to find a woman there waiting for him. She was very pretty with long dark hair in two side ponytails. "Welcome to Youkai Academy," she said brightly. "I am Ruby, assistant to the Chairman who is in charge here. I will be your guide. You are Naruto-san I presume?"

He nodded and gave her a slight bow. "Yes, I am Uzumaki Naruto. Please to meet you."

"Ah, this may seem like a foolish question but has the special nature of this school been explained to you?"

"You mean about it being a school for monsters where everyone just pretends to be human?" He nodded. "Yeah, it's been explained." He looked at her curiously. "If you don't mind my asking, what sort of monster are you?"

She shook her head. "I'm afraid I am not allowed to say. One of the rules of this school is that you are not allowed to reveal your true identity to anyone. That will help you as another rule is that any humans who discover this place must be killed. Since you are human you will need to keep that secret at all times."

Naruto began to laugh.

Something in his laugh seemed a bit ragged and made Ruby start to shiver. "What... what is so funny about that?"

He wiped a tear from his eyes and brought his giggle under control. "It's just that when I was living with the people of my village everyone said I was a monster. Now when I'm in a place filled with monsters I'm a human. I really can't seem to win can I?"

Ruby looked at him not really sure how to answer that. His extreme bitterness was obvious. Given what her own feelings had been until not too long ago she could understand the resentment. "Why don't we get going? I'll take you to your dorm first so you can put away your things. If we hurry you can be on time for your homeroom."

"Sure."

Naruto arrived at room 103 to a tense scene. A blond muscular kid was towering over a dark haired one and talking to him in a hard voice.

"Without your girlfriend you're nothing Tsukune." Saizou said. "You're no match for me. Don't get high and mighty just because you have the others fooled."

The boy stalked off to his seat while the one called Tsukune sat back down obviously relieved the ordeal was over.

Oh wonderful, Naruto thought. *I have to deal with stupid High School drama*. He assumed it had been about an ex-girlfriend or something equally juvenile. "Excuse me," he called from the door. "I'm a new student."

The blonde teacher looked at him with a confused expression for a moment, but then suddenly brightened. "Oh yes! With everything else going on today I'd almost forgotten. You are Naruto-kun right?"

He noticed a bright orange tail pop out from beneath her skirt and begin to wag. *Whoa, I guess she really is a monster.* "Yes."

She waved him into the room and addressed the class. "Everyone we have a new student today, this is Uzumaki Naruto who has come here from a place a long way away. Please make him feel welcome."

Naruto looked at the other students and bowed to them respectfully. "I am very happy to meet you all. I hope we can all get along well."

"Tsukune-kun, since you are now class representative why don't you help show Naruto around?"

The boy who'd just gotten threatened nodded his head. "Of course sensei I'll be happy to."

Naruto was less than happy with the choice but tried not to show it. *Well, I just hope I don't get dragged into any silly fights.*

Not what they appear to be

That morning Tsukune showed him around the school. He pointed out the library, the cafeteria, the gym and took him to his morning classrooms. As they walked the corridor Tsukune also took the time to point out people he should avoid. From lizard men to a carnivorous mermaid to a scary looking guy in a black school uniform it was a depressingly long list. As they were walking along a hot teacher with glasses and some tight fitting clothing came up to Tsukune and told him he was a, 'bad boy' before continuing on her way.

Naruto looked at him seriously impressed. "Whoa! A teacher? What's the deal between you and her?"

"You don't want to know," Tsukune said glumly. "Oh, and if she ever offers you some private tutoring say no!"

Naruto glanced at him questioningly. If he ever got that offer he would *definitely* have to say yes. "So what was that little scene in home room? Does that guy have it in for you or something?"

Nodding wearily Tsukune rubbed his neck; it had been bothering him all morning. "Yeah, more or less. His name is Saizo we had a run in right at the start of the school year. He was trying to bother Moka and I wound up having to try and stop him."

"Is Moka your girlfriend?"

Tsukune looked immediately nervous. "No, no, we're just really good friends."

"Uh huh, so what happened with Saizo? Did you beat him up? Don't uh, take this the wrong way but you don't seem very intimidating."

"Something you need to learn about this place is that looks can be really deceiving," Tsukune said seriously. "No one here is who they

appear to be."

Yeah, that's something I know about. "So, that mean you did beat him up then?" Naruto asked.

"No, someone else did, but I'd rather not say who."

Somehow or other, despite her many battles, most of the students were blithely unaware Moka was a vampire. By a strange twist of fate *he* kept getting all the credit for Moka's victories. The sweet outer Moka preferred to keep it that way for as long as she could.

"Since it's lunch time you want to eat together?" Tsukune asked changing the subject.

"Sure." Despite first impressions Tsukune seemed like a good guy.

Almost as soon as they sat down at an outside table two girls approached. One looked like a grade schooler and had on a pointed hat. The other was a seriously cute girl with light blue hair, a yellow sweater, and the biggest chest he'd ever seen. (Except for baachan's of course.)

"Tsukune!" The big chested girl greeted him by grabbing his head and burying it into her chest. "Let's have lunch together!" Tsukune waved his arms about like mad as he slowly suffocated.

Naruto watched this with a sense of wonder. He had never seen any girl be so forward in public. Even Sasuke's fan girls had never tried anything like this.

While still holding Tsukune in place the girl noticed him. "Oh hello, you're the new transfer student. I'm Kurono Kurumu, I'm in your homeroom, but then I'm sure you noticed me."

Naruto rubbed the back of his head. "Sorry, the only girl I really noticed was the one with pink hair. She... reminds me of someone."

For some reason his answer seemed to make the girl unhappy. She even let go of Tsukune as she glared at him and huffed.

The little school girl laughed. "You have good taste, that was Moka, the most beautiful girl in the whole school and Tsukune's girlfriend."

"She is not his girlfriend!" Kurumu said loudly.

Tsukune neither confirmed nor denied, he merely blushed and looked uncomfortable.

"You know denial is the last refuge of the desperate," the little girl said smugly.

Bam!

"Owie," the little girl said from the ground.

Naruto stared at the furious Kurumu whose fist was still shaking.
Whoa! These people here really are dangerous! Actually her sudden violence when upset reminded him of Sakura.

Eventually all four of them were sitting at the table eating lunch. The little girl had been introduced to him as Yukari.

"I'm a witch!" She said with a playful smile.

"You're not supposed to tell people that Yukari." Tsukune chided her lightly.

"Desu! It doesn't matter, everyone knows anyway."

"What kind of monster are you Naruto?" Kurumu asked sullenly. She was still a bit upset at having him notice Moka but not her.

"I'd rather not say," Naruto answered.

Kurumu frowned but Tsukune jumped in. "Kurumu-chan you really shouldn't ask that. You shouldn't try to get people to break the rules."

"I'm sorry Tsukune," she said lightening her mood. "You're such a good example to everyone else. No wonder you were elected class representative."

Tsukune's head dropped. "Don't remind me." *How did this happen? How did the only human in this whole school end up a class rep? If any one finds out the truth about me I'm dead.* Last semester Kuyou had found about him and almost killed him. He'd survived only because his friends had fought for him and Moka had given him some of her blood.

That thought made him rub his neck again.

Kurumu noticed. "Is something wrong Tsukune? You seem kind of low energy today."

"Heh, it's nothing," he said with a weak smile. He didn't want to worry anyone.

"Oh, I found you!" Moka called and hurried to join them. "I'm so glad I didn't want to eat lunch without you."

"Yay! Moka!" Yukari said.

Naruto looked at her, the beautiful girl with pink hair and green eyes. *Sakura.*

"Please excuse me," he said and got up from the table. All eyes turned to him. "I think I'll do some exploring during the rest of lunch. It was nice to meet you all." He then left.

Moka stood there a little surprised at his sudden departure. She looked at Tsukune. "Did I do something wrong?"

"Of course not Moka-san," he assured her. "Naruto is probably feeling a little overwhelmed being at a new school and all."

"Desu! He's probably in love with you and can't stand to see you with your boyfriend!"

Both Tsukune and Moka blushed and struggled to answer that.

Kurumu though watched his departing back with interest.

Naruto made it to the rest of his classes and got through the day without any issue. He's gotten a depressing amount of reading assigned to him along with a small mountain of homework problems due by the end of the week. It would have seemed impossible if not for his ability with kage bunshins. He would get everything done tonight and impress his teachers. Not that it really mattered. School work, grades, learning, none of that mattered to him. The things he wanted to learn were in his duffel bag. So far as he was concerned the only thing he was doing at this school was killing time.

After the last class he didn't feel like going straight back to his tiny dorm room. He instead began to wander about the campus. Witches, mermaids, lizard men, and teachers with tails this place sure was full of strange creatures. *I guess I should fit right in. me a jinchuuriki with a fox demon in his belly.* He didn't honestly know if he wanted to fit in though.

When he'd been a kid at the academy he'd been desperate to gain acceptance and make friends. Now though he wasn't sure what he wanted. After watching Sakura die and seeing Sasuke's betrayal he wasn't sure he could stand one more loss. It hurt too much to make those bonds with people only to have them broken and those precious people lost to you forever. *Maybe I really should be alone.*

He was walking around the back of the school when he spotted Tsukune and Moka by what was probably an incinerator. Seeing the lovely Moka again reminded him of Sakura. It gave him an ache deep inside his heart to see her and remember that Sakura was really gone.

He was just about to turn around and go when he saw Tsukune pitch forward and collapse.

"Hey, is he o.k.?"

Moka looked up to see Naruto approach them. Tsukune was lying on the ground with his head cradled in her lap. He was groaning weakly and running a temperature. "I... I don't know what's wrong with him. I... I think my blood..."

"Moka-san," Tsukune spoke in a scratchy voice. "I'm, fi... fine, don't worry." With her help he managed to shakily get back to his feet.

Naruto got to his side and placed a hand beneath an arm to help steady him. "Is there a hospital or at least a nurse's office nearby?"

Moka nodded. "There's a school infirmary not far from here."

"I don't need to go there," Tsukune said reassuringly. "I just need a little rest."

"Tsukune you're running a fever," Moka told him. "You should definitely see a doctor!"

"Awww, what's wrong Tsukune? Not feeling well?"

"Sai... Saizo?" Tsukune gasped.

The menacing blond grinned at him. "Today's not going to be your day." Behind him a boy in a wool cap began to giggle and prance a bit.

Not now, Tsukune thought.

"You know Tsukune instead of looking at me you really should watch your back."

My back?

From behind him a boy appeared, his arms transformed into two long blades. "Nice to meet you Tsukune-san!" He said in a cheery voice. "I'm Moroha of the outcast ayashi. Sorry for the surprise attack. No hard feelings o.k.?"

"Tsukune look out!" Moka screamed.

"Move!" Naruto shouted and pushed both Tsukune and Moka to the ground. Moroha's blades missed their intended target but instead sliced deep into Naruto's chest in a huge 'X.' Blood poured from him as he staggered and fell.

"What an idiot!" Moroha crowed. "What are you a hero or something?" He turned back around, his bladed arms coated in Naruto's blood. Naruto was down in a pool of it, Tsukune was lying on top of Moka unhurt. Well that was about to change.

Saizo was suddenly frightened though by this unexpected reprieve. "Moroha! Get him quick before..."

Saizo snapped shut his mouth and the other two gaped at where a frightening amount of demonic energy was gathering.

A weak Tsukune rolled off of Moka, her rosario clutched in his hand. He crawled over to Naruto as a transformed Moka rose calmly to her feet. "I thought you'd learned your lesson last time little boy."

Fearfully Saizo transformed himself and looked at the other two. "We can take her, the three of us together."

"Ye... yeah," Moroha said and gritted his teeth. "We can do it and show the school how tough we are."

"No way man," the boy in the wool cap said. "You said this would be easy!"

"It's three to one!" Saizo roared. "We can still do it!"

"It's not three to one," a cold and furious voice spoke. Everyone stared as Naruto got up from what should have been a fatal, or at least crippling, wound. Everyone save Moka gasped as they felt demonic energy surround him.

Naruto looked directly at Moroha with red slitted eyes like the ones Moka had at the moment. He held out his palm and a glowing swirl of energy formed. "If you're going to attack a ninja you had better kill him."

Moroha froze in place as he felt killer intent hit him. His heart began to pound and his knees began to shake. "What... what the hell are you?!"

Naruto grinned with fanged teeth. "You know I've been wondering that same thing. But as far as you're concerned I'm the shinigami come to take you to hell." He ran straight for him.

"Dumbass! I'll kill you for sure!" Moroha ran at him.

Moroha aimed both blades at Naruto's chest again planning to cut him clean in half this time. He was surprised when Naruto simply leapt over him. He had no time to wonder at his opponent's athletic ability though.

"Rasengan!" Without a second's hesitation Naruto plunged his hand into his enemy's back and through his chest.

Saizo stared as Moroha fell wordlessly in a bloody heap. How?! How had his plan gone this wrong?!

"Saizo!" Moka shouted after pummeling the nameless fool in the wool cap. "If you threaten me or Tsukune ever again I will end your life! Now for the final time **KNOW YOUR PLACE!**"

She delivered a merciless kick with all her might into his face. Saizo was sent flying through a number of trees and wound up in a small

crater defeated and unconscious.

With the fight over Naruto calmed down and quickly returned to his normal appearance.

Except for his uniform now being ruined and covered in blood of course.

Tsukune was standing again with Moka's help. Both of them were looking at him, Tsukune with fear, Moka with curiosity.

Naruto grinned. "'No one here is who they appear to be.' Right Tsukune?"

Tsukune slowly nodded. "Did you... did you have to kill him?"

"What do you mean?" Naruto asked. "He tried to kill me; he would have if I were a normal human."

"Just what are you?" Moka asked calmly. "I sense a great deal of power in you, but you are like no monster I'm aware of."

"I'd rather not say," he told her. Even in a school filled with monsters he was worried what they would think if they knew about Kyuubi. *Especially* if they ever found out what he had done. "Do you think I'll get in trouble for this?" He nodded to the body.

"No, I don't think so," Tsukune said. "Moka-san and I will both tell everyone you were acting in self defense."

"Well that's a relief," he said. "I'd hate to have to go on the run the same day I got here." He turned to go. "Well I guess I'll see you in homeroom tomorrow."

"You were seriously wounded," Moka called out. "Do you not need to go to the infirmary?"

"Nope," he answered. "I heal fast."

Tsukune and Moka watched him depart.

"Moka-san what do you think of him?"

She turned to Tsukune with a slight grin. "I think you are very lucky I met you first."

In his room Naruto had thrown out his uniform. He would just have to go to school in his ninja gear tomorrow until he could get a replacement. He'd hidden away the jutsu scrolls as well as he could and put most of things away.

In his hand was his hitai-ite, the one Iruka had given him so long ago. He had specific orders not to mention Konoha or reveal the leaf symbol to anyone. Though it was unlikely anyone from his world would ever be able to come here everything that touched ninja or Konoha or the Kyuubi was classified. He'd thought of simply throwing the hitai-ite away, since he never expected to wear it again. But it had been too precious to him. Iruka's gift, it was a reminder of the few good memories he still had of home. He left it at the bottom of a clothes drawer.

He turned his duffel bag over and shook it to make sure he'd gotten everything. One final item spilled out.

A necklace with a crystal.

She'd given it back to him.

He picked it up and looked at it. *She wouldn't have given this back to me if it meant it would be lost forever. This is her way of telling me she believes I'll come back one day and be Hokage.* He knew it would never be. That dream was gone forever. But it looked like someone still believed in him.

He felt warm tears run down his cheeks. "You're so stupid grandma."

Joining a club

Midou had watched the fight play itself out from the safety of the academy roof. He had warned Saizo about picking a fight and not winning it. The fool had decided to ignore his warning and go ahead. Now Moroha was dead and the outcast ayashi had suffered a defeat that would damage their reputation. That Saizo had failed wasn't the surprise, rather it was *how* he had failed that had taken Midou off guard.

That was why he'd arranged this meeting in the woods outside the academy.

"Two S-rank monsters you say?" Hokuto spoke slowly and deliberately. "And you're sure one of them is a vampire?"

"Yeah, I'm sure. It's hard to miss the signs even at a distance." Midou confirmed. "It turns out that what Saizo thought was dead on. The girl Moka was the threat while I didn't see anything from Aono."

"Which doesn't necessarily mean he's powerless," Kiria said from nearby as he read a book. "What happened to him?"

"After the fight the vampire brought him to the infirmary, he seemed to have been sick even before the fight started."

"So Aono *might* still be dangerous. He might have appeared so weak because of illness." Kiria pointed out.

"I suppose," Midou conceded.

"I'm much more interested in this second monster," Hokuto said. "What do you know about him?"

"Nothing," Midou said. "I've never seen him before."

"But you're sure he was that powerful?" Kiria asked.

"I'm sure," Midou said grimly. "He had a demonic aura at least as strong as the vampire's. He shook off a major wound like it was nothing and took Moroha out with some kind of power I've never seen before. He is definitely a high level opponent."

"Hmmm, a wild card, that always makes the game more interesting. I want to know who this person is." Hokuto said and looked to Kiria. "Find out about him."

"Right," Kiria replied without looking up from his book.

"What about Aono and the vampire?" Midou asked.

"Leave them be for now. No need to do anything rash where a vampire is concerned."

"And Saizo? He picked a fight and lost."

Hokuto looked at his subordinate with a dismissive shake of the head. "If he lost he's a weakling and we don't need him. Get rid of him, and do it in front of everyone to make a proper example."

"Right," Midou said. "I'll take care of it myself."

Kiria waited for Midou to depart before speaking his mind. "You worried?"

"Not really," Hokuto answered. "We've come much too far to turn back now. But we'll be careful, there's no reason to take pointless chances. Especially about someone I know nothing about."

Tsukune slowly opened his eyes.

"How are you feeling?" A gentle voice asked.

He smiled to see the pink haired Moka standing over him. He slowly realized where he was. "Why am I in the infirmary?"

"You had a high fever and were very sick Tsukune," she told him.
"They've given you a bunch of antibiotics. How do you feel?"

"Better," he told her. "But my neck still hurts." He reached a hand to his throat and noted it was now wrapped in bandages.

"That's because my bite marks haven't healed yet," she said sadly.
"Tsukune there's something we need to talk about."

"Yes Moka-san?"

"I think I know why you've been ill. It's because of my blood."

He looked at her and felt a little worry. "The blood you've injected into me?"

She nodded and nervously dug her foot to the floor. "You know how my blood has given you short boosts of power? How it has transformed you into a vampire for a few minutes each time?"

He nodded. "Sure, I wouldn't be here now if you hadn't done that."
His victories against Kuyou, Rikiishi, and Kotsubo had all been thanks to that.

"Well the reason you're suffering right now is because your body has reached its limit. The vampire blood I've given you is still in your system and its affecting you."

"Affecting me? Affecting me how exactly?"

"I am not sure," Moka said quietly. "It is threatening to change your body, and it will if I give you any more."

"Change me how Moka-san?" he asked fearfully. "It's... it's not going to turn me into a vampire is it?"

"That's one possibility," she told him. "There are others." *All of them much worse.* "But so long as you don't get any more blood and take

it easy your body will eventually recover fully." She looked down sadly. "That's why I think..." She couldn't say the rest.

"Moka-san?"

"Tsukune, I... I think you should leave the academy and never come back."

Naruto was walking from his dorm to the academy. He had on his ninja clothing, but thanks to a henge he looked like everyone else. Around his neck was the Shoudai's necklace. He knew wearing the thing was inviting the curse to come claim him. But baachan had given it to him and it was a sign of her faith in him. He would wear it and take his chances.

"Hi there," a bright voice chirped.

Naruto looked over to see the pretty and big chested girl from yesterday. "Good morning Kurumu," he greeted her politely.

She approached him and fell in beside him with a huge smile on her face. "Good morning Naruto-kun, it's good to see you."

Naruto-kun? He was surprised but tried not to show it. It had taken him years to finally get Sakura or any other girl to call him that. *Some of the girls here really are forward, or maybe it's just her.*

"Say Naruto-kun, I was wanting to ask you about something."

"What?" He said cautiously.

"Are you in love with Moka?"

He stopped and stared at her.

"Because if you are I'd be happy to help you get her. I think you two would make a lovely couple!"

"And let me guess, you would have Tsukune all to yourself right?" He shook his head in disbelief. Were fan girls some sort of universal plague? Honestly he could close his eyes and imagine Ino saying the exact same words. *How the hell does Tsukune have so many fangirls? He even has a teacher for kami's sake!* "Sorry, but I'm not in love with her or anyone." He got going again.

Kurumu stayed right at his side undeterred. "You sure? You seemed *awfully* worked up the other day when she came over to have lunch."

"That's because she reminds me of someone."

"Oh? Who, an ex-girlfriend?"

"No," Naruto answered quietly. "She was never my girlfriend, but I always wanted her to be. I... I had feelings for her for a long time, but we were never more than friends."

"Awww, that's kind of sweet, carrying a torch like that. What finally happened? Did she wind up with someone else?"

"No," he told her. "My best friend killed her right in front of me. Then I killed him."

When he said that Kurumu came to a dead stop while he kept going. It took her a minute and she then caught up. "Is... is that true?"

"Yeah."

"I'm sorry, I can't even imagine..."

"It's all right," he said. "But I don't want to date anyone, especially not her. Whenever I see her I can't help but remember Sakura."

"I see," Kurumu said sadly. It was very tragic. But... also kind of romantic in a way.

In homeroom Tsukune was absent. Moka informed everyone that he was in the infirmary recovering from a fever. She listened with only half an ear as Kurumu said she was going to get some flowers and visit him.

Her mind was on what he had said to her last night.

Flashback

"You want me to leave?"

"No, but... but if you stay here Tsukune I'm afraid of what might happen!" She looked at him pleadingly. "Tsukune I care about you so much and just being with you makes me happy! If I were to never see you again I know I would be heart broken."

"Moka-san, I... I feel the same way."

"But Tsukune, if you stay here and something were to happen to you," she looked miserable. "I know how dangerous this place is for you, and I can't give you my blood again. If something happened to you I couldn't bear it!"

She felt his hand reach out and take hers. "It's all right Moka-san," he said comfortingly. "No matter what happens I won't leave. You mean too much for me to just leave and never see you again. I'll stay and fight to be with you Moka-san."

She looked down at him and felt her heart pounding. She knew she should have been cruel and really tried to drive him away, that was what her inner self would have done. But she didn't have it in her to be mean to him. So she simply nodded and said nothing more about it.

"Oh Naruto," Nekonome-sensei called. "Have you given any thought about what sort of club you'd like to join?"

"I have to join a club?" He said in surprise.

"Yes you do, it's a school requirement." His homeroom teacher told him. "Do you have any special interests?"

He thought about it for a moment. "Well I like training with weapons, hand to hand fighting, ramen, and the color orange."

"Perfect!" She said and her tail began to wag madly. "I have the perfect club that will satisfy all your interests!"

"Really?" He said a bit curiously.

"Welcome to the Newspaper club, I'm the editor Morioka Ginei, but you can just call me Gin."

"If you have any questions Gin will be able to help you," Nekonome promised.

"Uh, sensei? How exactly is this the right club for me?"

"I don't really know," she admitted. "But I'm sure it will be!" She left her tail wagging.

Gin smiled. "Did she mention she's our faculty advisor?"

Naruto grunted sourly. "Well now it makes sense." He looked about at the empty room. "So are we the only members?"

"No, there are four others. Tsukune is in the infirmary though and the girls are all visiting him."

"By girls you wouldn't mean Moka, Kurumu, and Yukari would you?"

Gin nodded impressed. "I take it you've met them. They all pretty much joined just to be able to spend time with him."

Grinning Naruto shook his head. "How exactly is he so popular with women? Am I missing something?"

Gin also shook his head. "I have no idea how he managed it, it's a mystery."

There was a knock on the room door.

"Come in," Gin called.

The door opened and a tall man with long blonde hair, two dots above the bridge of his nose and a black school uniform entered.

The second he saw him Gin lost his casual mood and turned to face him looking as though he was expecting a fight. "Kuyou!" He barked. "What the hell do you want this time?"

Kuyou eyed Gin with open contempt. "I'm not here to waste my time with you or your ridiculous club." His eyes shifted to Naruto.

Naruto got a bad feeling. *Crap, am I getting stuck in someone else's fight again?*

"Please come with me Uzumaki Naruto, I want to talk to you."

A different uniform

The two of them walked out of the academy without saying much more. Gin had warned him not to go but Naruto wanted to know what this guy wanted to talk to him about. He'd only been here a total of two days yet it seemed he was being dragged into things he knew nothing about. If he had to live in this weird place he just wanted to be left alone. He wanted no part of whatever problems existed here; they were none of his business.

The tall blond guy in the black uniform, 'Kuyou' led him well away from the school building and the road and into the forest. A perfect place for trying to ambush someone. Naruto kept a careful eye on him and on the nearby woods; he deliberately stayed about five yards behind him.

Finally Kuyou came to a halt. Naruto stopped too and remained behind him.

Kuyou turned and looked him over with a smug and superior face. It was a look that reminded him of Sasuke back in their academy days. It was a look that spoke of a sense of superiority that was so certain it did not have to be spoken.

It was enough to annoy him. "O.k., so what did you want to talk to me about?" Naruto demanded.

"I know what you are," Kuyou said simply and looked even more smug.

Those words worried him but Naruto made sure not to let it show. "O.k., what am I?"

"A kitsune demon," Kuyou said coolly. "Or more precisely, a kitsune demon's container."

Naruto stared at him and tried to hide his sudden panic. *He knows! Does he know what I did?*

Kuyou rubbed his nose. "There is no need for fear, I mean you no harm."

"What makes you think I'm afraid?"

"You *stink* of fear," Kuyou replied and rubbed his nose again.

Naruto eyed him carefully and let his hand drop serenely to his side by his weapons pouch. "Let's say that's true, what do you want from me?"

"I want to help you master the power that is inside of you." Kuyou said. "I felt it when you unleashed it earlier. Raw and untamed, limitless potential but you *barely* have any control. Power without self discipline is a very dangerous combination, especially the level of might I can sense in you. I can help you control the power inside of you, I can give you discipline."

Naruto narrowed his eyes. "Promises are easy to make, why should I believe you?"

Before his eyes the man suddenly transformed into a four tailed fox made of living fire. "Does this convince you? I am a youkai kitsune, though my level of power pales to what you posses inside of you. I understand your potential and how to control it."

Naruto could feel the heat coming off the fox's body and took a few steps back. He put a hand up to partially cover his eyes against the glare. "O.k., I believe you might know how to help me. But *why* do you want to? Somehow I get this feeling you're not doing this out of the kindness of your heart."

Kuyou transformed back into his original form. "I lead the Student Police Committee, an organization dedicated to maintaining the

peace and order of this school. Your potential might is a threat to that peace, one I intend to deal with, in one manner or another."

Naruto put his hand back on his weapons' pouch. "That so?"

Kuyou noticed the movement and sneered at him. "I do not intend to attack you; given what you are I much prefer to help guide you. You are a youkai kitsune, in a way, and I would much prefer to make you an ally rather than an enemy. Join me and my committee and you can be a force for justice and peace here. I will take you under my wing and help you master the forces inside of you."

"Well that sounds wonderful, maintain peace and justice and all that. But I couldn't help but notice that gin didn't think you were so benevolent." Naruto pointed out. "What was the term he used? Cold hearted fascist I believe?"

Kuyou snarled. "Gin is nothing but a mindless troublemaker who enjoys associating with the wrong people. Take my advice; you don't want to be on his side."

"I don't want to be on any side," Naruto told him. "All I want is to be left alone while I'm here."

"That would be impossible," Kuyou said. "You are far too strong to be treated like an ordinary student. You have already made an enemy of Anti-thesis, they will not ignore you."

"And what the hell is Anti-thesis?"

"A group of rowdy and vicious half breeds who live to cause chaos and disorder. In short, a gang of the lowest and most violent of monsters. The boy you killed yesterday was one of them. They will certainly come looking for revenge."

"I did that in self defense," Naruto argued. "He attacked me first."

Kuyou grinned. "When they come for you, you can explain that to them. On the other hand were you a member of the Police Committee they would not dare attack you."

Naruto frowned. "Sounds to me like you're just another gang."

"Don't compare me and my organization to that scum!" Kuyou said sharply. "We are a group of elites dedicated to order and peace! They are the lowest of the low and believe in nothing but taking whatever they want! We are opposites, we represent order and chaos."

"Sounds a lot more like you are two sides of the same coin," Naruto said. His experiences as a ninja had shown him that things were rarely as black and white as you wanted them to be.

"I offer you my protection and my help in learning to control your abilities," Kuyou said. "If you reject me you will be completely on your own."

Naruto thought about it. He damn well knew this Kuyou guy was trying to drag him into something he wanted no part of. He really did just want to be left alone.

But...

He had killed that guy yesterday. If he really was part of a gang then there was a good chance he would be attacked at some point. Ero-sennin had taught him that if you were going to war it was always better to do so with allies, especially when you did not know the enemy's strength. Moka had helped him, but she and Tsukune had been attacked as well. He did not know her well enough to know if he could count on her help if he needed it.

Of course he didn't know Kuyou either, but the man obviously had power and was offering to be an ally. Even though it came with strings. He was also offering him greater control over the Kyuubi's

power. If there was any slight chance of going home again he needed to gain that control.

No matter what it cost.

"All right," Naruto finally said. "I'll join your gang."

"It is no gang; it is the Student Police Committee."

"Whatever."

"Do you want some more cherry flavored shaved ice?" Mizore asked.

"Do you want another shoulder rub?" Kurumu asked

"Do you want some oral... mmph?" Yukari was cut off by Moka planting a hand over her mouth and dragging her out the room.

"Excuse us," Moka said.

Tsukune closed his eyes and tried to relax. He was glad the girls were visiting him while he was laid up, but sometimes their attention could be a bit much. He sniffled a little.

"Are you catching cold Tsukune?" Kurumu asked.

"No, I'm fine," he told her.

"It's best not to take any chances." She immediately pulled his blanket up and got into bed with him.

"Kurumu what are you doing?!"

"Making sure you're warm," she said innocently. "Body heat is best for warming a person up."

In the next second Kurumu found herself in a block of ice. "He doesn't want that kind of warmth do you Tsukune-kun?"

He couldn't answer as his teeth were chattering from the sudden chill.

Out in the corridor Moka released her grip on Yukari.

"You're so mean Moka! Desu! I was just trying to make Tsukune feel good!"

Moka blushed. "You're only 12 Yukari; you shouldn't be offering to do those sorts of things."

"Even with Tsukune?"

" *Especially* with Tsukune," Moka said firmly. "Yukari, there's something I want to ask you about. What do you know about ninja?"

Yukari looked up at her blankly. "Ninja?"

Moka nodded. During the fight Naruto had said something about not attacking a ninja unless you killed him. "What do you know about them?"

"Not much," she said. "They were highly trained warriors who first appeared in feudal Japan around the 14th century. They were essentially the opposite of the samurai who fought by the strict codes of bushido and believed in honor above all. Ninja specialized in assassination, theft, spying, and kidnapping. They are believed to have died out in the 19th century though some dispute this. They are still popular in human culture, books, and films, especially in Japan and the east."

Moka grinned. "I thought you didn't know much."

She shrugged. "I don't, that's all basic info, why do you want to know about ninja all of a sudden?"

"Oh, no reason," Moka said. "So were all ninja human?"

Moka nodded. "That's right; some people claimed they had unnatural powers, especially in the areas of stealth and illusion. But they were just highly skilled humans." (In the human world of the RV universe humans cannot use chakra. So the humans of this world could not use jutsus.)

"I see," Moka replied. *Well that doesn't help at all, he obviously isn't human.*

When they returned to Tsukune's room Moka came to a sudden stop. Kurumu and Mizore were both in his bed grabbing onto him.

"Desu! Save some for me!"

Kurumu was heading towards homeroom rubbing the bumps on her head. She had no idea that sweet outer Moka could be that scary and violent. Tsukune would be out for another few days so she wouldn't even have the pleasure of looking at him in class. *Yet again I can't get close to my destined one because of the other girls! I hate this! I want Tsukune to be with me and just me!* The problem was that Tsukune was just too kind and gentle. While she loved that about him it also meant that he was loathe to make a choice that was bound to hurt the girls not chosen. Kurumu of course refused to even consider the possibility that he might choose anyone but her in the end. How could he? She was *obviously* the most beautiful and sexiest and clearly the one for him.

But how do I get Tsukune to realize it? Entering homeroom she picked up a weird vibe. She sensed fear, sensed it so strongly she was brought out of her own thoughts.

There in the middle of the room was Naruto... in a black school uniform. All the students in the class, and even the teacher, were deliberately *not* looking at him.

"Naruto! What are you doing dressed in that?" She demanded.

He looked at her and answered. "Kuyou invited me to join his merry band and I said yes."

"Do you *know* the sorts of things they do?" Kurumu asked heatedly.

"Nope," he answered. "But I guess you're going to tell me aren't you?"

"They threaten and *torture* anyone who disagrees with them. Last semester they were going to kill Tsukune because they thought he was human. They arrest people just on suspicion they might have done something wrong. They lock people away and torture them and never answer to anyone!"

Naruto slowly nodded. "That does sound pretty bad; no wonder Gin doesn't like them. It also explains why people have been avoiding me all morning."

"Well since you know what they're like now you'll quit right?"

"Nope," he said.

"But..."

"I have my reasons Kurumu," Naruto said calmly. "And I don't care if people hate and ignore me, I'm used to it. If being in this Police Committee helps me then I'll stay in it and serve Kuyou, at least for now."

She stared at him disbelieving. "I won't be friends with someone who wears that uniform."

He looked at her blankly. "O.k."

She stared at him some more before finally taking her seat. She made no effort to try and talk to him again.

A different sort of training

They were in one of the underground cells of the small building occupied by the Police Committee. What people could see didn't look like much. Just a simple one story structure of wood and brick. It wood timbers looked faded and there were cracks and small signs of disrepair all around it. The building itself certainly didn't look ominous. Yet no student would willingly come within 500 yards of it.

That was because like everything else at the academy it was not what it seemed.

Hidden beneath the visible building were two vast underground floors with a total of sixty rooms. Most of these were tiny cells no more than ten square feet. Without light or even plumbing, they were dank dark holes where people could be kept, literally until they died. Several of the cells had skeletons in them; a couple still had the tattered remains of school uniforms. In several other were prisoners who would begin screaming and pleading for mercy whenever the lights in the hall would come on. All of them claimed to be innocent, all of them wanted to be released.

"I'll let some of them go," Kuyou had told him the first time he'd brought him down here. "The ones who committed minor offenses. They'll go back and either transfer out or become model students who would never dare break a rule again. Either way they'll spread stories about what happens to those who disturb the peace of the academy."

"What about the rest?" Naruto asked.

Kuyou had simply grinned.

"What do you do when you arrest someone who is innocent?"

"No one is innocent," Kuyou said flatly.

"What about Tsukune? Didn't you arrest him last semester?"

"Tsukune was arrested because I received false information that he was human," Kuyou said tightly.

"So you made a mistake?"

"No," Kuyou said. "I do not make mistakes. I was given false information. Now let us continue." He clearly did not want to discuss it any further.

You acted on false information, how was that not a mistake? Naruto wondered.

The two of them were in one of the larger storage rooms on the second sub level. In an old copper brazier there was a fire raging. Four metal rods were stuck in the coals and were glowing white hot.

Kuyou drew one of them out and looked lovingly at the blazing hot metal.

"You're going to enjoy this aren't you?" Naruto asked.

Kuyou grinned. "Perhaps." He moved towards him with the iron rod in his hand. The end of it was blunt, it was not meant to cut at all. "Are you ready?"

Naruto was surrounded by red chakra. It had the form of a fox with a single tail twitching back and forth. His eyes were red and slitted and the scars on his face were thicker than they had been, his teeth had grown fangs. He looked every inch a demon.

"Yeah, I'm ready," he said quietly. He held out his clawed right hand. With a grunt of effort he forced the red chakra to flow back from his fingers and palm, until his hand was cleared up to the wrist.

With a smile on his lips Kuyou pressed the tip of the rod into Naruto's palm. The skin turned black and burned with a low hiss, a tiny stream of smoke appeared along with the smell of burning meat.

"Yaaaaaaahh!!" Naruto screamed. The red chakra jerked about in reaction to his pain. It began to flow forward from his wrist back up his hand.

"Control it," Kuyou said calmly as he slowly drove the rod deeper into his flesh. He was not cutting or stabbing; the metal was *burning* its way through. "You must control it."

Panting and grinding his teeth Naruto shut his eyes and tried to think through the searing pain in his hand. The red chakra stopped about halfway from his wrist up his palm. It quivered and shook like a living thing, and slowly receded back to his wrist.

"Good," Kuyou said. There was a slight hint of admiration. He pressed the rod all the way through Naruto's hand and drove it until half the foot long piece of metal was on either side. "Well done," he said and pulled another rod from the fire. "Now the other hand."

"How... how is this supposed to... to help?" It was a struggle just to think with the murderous pain coming from his hand.

"Your power responds to emotion," Kuyou explained yet *again*. "To gain real control you must learn to control it regardless of what you may be feeling. If you can control it even when every instinct is telling you not to that will be a long step forward."

"I... I... had a teacher who... who tried to help me... with this. He ne... never did any... anything like this."

"Since you are here now and no longer with him I take it his methods failed." Kuyou held the glowing metal out a few inches in front of Naruto's eyes. He could feel his whole face baking. "Do you want me to stop?"

Grunting he forced the chakra around his other hand to melt away.
"No... do it, please."

With a happy smile Kuyou slowly pressed the rod into his second hand.

Naruto was slightly proud of himself for not screaming as loudly that second time.

A couple weeks had passed and Tsukune and his friends were all eating together at one of the outdoor tables. Tsukune had recovered from his fever and seemed as good as new. The only reminder of his illness was the mark left from Moka's fangs. They had faded but stubbornly refused to disappear.

Though it left her feeling weakened due to her anemia Moka had ceased to drink his blood. She was sorely tempted each and every time she came close enough to pick up his delicious scent, but she restrained herself. She was too afraid of hurting him.

With Tsukune among them again and peace having returned they did their best to concentrate on normal activities.

"So Tsukune, what do you think of the Student Council President? You seem to have been working with him a lot lately." Moka inquired.

Tsukune nodded eagerly. "Hokuto-san is a really great person, he wants to change this school for the better and bring a real peace here. I really admire him."

"It's not fair though," Kurumu complained. "You've been spending less and less time with the newspaper club."

"Heh, I'm sorry about that, but it can't be helped." Tsukune said.
"Hokuto-san has placed me on the festival planning committee and is really relying on me. It's a lot of work to bring everything together

with so many different classes involved. Maybe when the festival is over I'll be able to spend more time with all of you."

"I sure hope so," Yukari said. "But the festival is still a whole month away. Desu!"

"It's all right," Moka said gently and placed a hand over his. "As long as you're happy Tsukune that's all that matters."

Kurumu drank her milk as she silently watched Tsukune give Moka's hand a small squeeze. She noted the way he smiled at her appreciatively, and how she looked back. *They're getting closer to each other.* The thought made her heart ache, especially as she didn't know what to do about it. The old her would have charmed him and that would have been it. But she didn't want to win him that way. She wanted him to honestly return her feelings.

I've shown him my sexiness and that I adore him. What else am I supposed to do? She was ready to respond to *any* request he put forward. But he had never done or said anything that suggested he wanted anything more than friendship from her. The little signals and hints that he *did* send out were always for Moka. There just had to be a way to change this situation, but how?

Maybe I should talk to mom and ask for advice.

Around the courtyard there was a sudden stir and they all looked over.

There was Naruto with a tray full of food. People quickly got out of his way or diverted their eyes. Naruto walked past all the occupied tables and sat down beneath a tree. He then began eating his lunch in what looked like a peaceful solitude.

"Why does he always sit on the ground?" Yukari asked.

"Well, the tables are all full," Tsukune pointed out.

"That doesn't matter Tsukune," Moka pointed out. "He could sit wherever he wanted and people would make room for him. In fact they would probably all move and give him the table."

"Maybe he doesn't want to bother anyone," Kurumu put in. "He seems like a decent guy." The others all stared at her. Even Mizore popped her head up from behind some shrubs to join in. "What?"

"He's a fascist. Desu!"

"Have you forgotten what the Police Committee almost did to Tsukune?" Moka asked quietly.

"Of course not! But Naruto had nothing to do with that, it was all Kuyou's doing."

"He's working for Kuyou now you top heavy imbecile! He has to be a bad person." Yukari said.

"Wait, didn't he save you and Moka, Tsukune?" Kurumu asked.

Tsukune nodded. "He did, but that was before he joined the Police Committee. And he *killed* his attacker without any hesitation." Tsukune paled a little at the memory.

"I think Naruto is very dangerous and that we should be careful around him." Moka said.

Kurumu frowned. Naruto had not returned to the newspaper club of course, but unlike the other members of the Police Committee he still attended class regularly. The other members were given private tutoring and allowed to remain separate from the rest of the student body. For that matter they also ate separately too. For some reason Naruto did not choose to take advantage of the special privileges his new position offered him.

" I don't care if people hate and ignore me, I'm used to it."

He'd said that to her and seemed to really mean it. She remembered what he'd told her about seeing the girl he cared for killed right in front of him by his best friend, and then killing him. She thought there was a lot more to him than anyone suspected. She definitely thought his interests were different from those other elitists who made up the committee. *He is definitely not what he appears to be.*

"Why don't we invite him to eat with us again?"

For a second time everyone just stared.

"Ah... I don't know if that would be a good idea," Tsukune said quietly. "Seeing him kill so easily makes me a little worried. And that black uniform..."

"If Tsukune's not comfortable then neither am I," Moka said.

"Desu! If you like him so much why don't you go eat with him?"

"Don't be stupid you chestless wonder." Kurumu snapped. "I don't like him at all; I was just trying to be nice." She dug back into her food and the topic was dropped.

"You wanted to see me?" Midou asked as he approached Hokuto and Kiria in a desolate part of the wood.

Hokuto nodded as he looked at a report Kiria had just delivered to him. "Yes, Midou I have something in mind for you and your men."

"What can I do leader?"

"I want you to kidnap someone."

A prisoner

Moka left the girls' dorm a little early as she usually did. She liked meeting Tsukune before she could be surrounded by her, 'fan boys.' She was very glad to see him healthy again. She knew that so long as she did not give him any more infusions his body would eventually filter out the vampire blood within him. All she really wanted was for Tsukune to be all right. A part of her, a very small part, occasionally thought what it would be like if he were a vampire. The outer pink haired part of her already loved him. She hadn't found the courage to tell him that yet, but she was willing to admit to herself that she loved the boy and wanted to always be with him. The inner silver haired part of her also loved him and treasured him. But her vampire pride mattered more to that Moka than the feeling of love ever would. No matter how much she might truly care for him the silver haired Moka would *never* accept a human as her mate.

If he ever asked her, she would turn him and make him like her. Injecting her blood into his system was so dangerous mainly because there was no way to know the outcome. There were three possibilities from continued injection; becoming a vampire, becoming a ghoul, or dying. The odds of each were about the same and there was no way for her to know how his body would react.

But there was another way. If he were to *drink* her blood he would become a vampire. Imagining it, Tsukune's mouth on her wrist or neck slurping greedily, gave her a sudden warm feeling. In so many ways that would be an ideal solution to all his problems. He would no longer be in danger of being found out as a human. He would be safe, or at least safer, from attacks here at the academy. And best of all her inner self would be ready to accept him; they could become a couple... and some day mates.

She shook her head. *I'm being selfish, that's not what he wants.* After the first time she'd injected him with her blood Tsukune had panicked fearing he was becoming a vampire. He'd confronted her

and told her he didn't want to become a, 'disgusting' vampire. Hearing him say that had hurt. The misunderstanding had been cleared up and she had forgiven him, but she understood that he wanted to remain human no matter what.

When she got to her favorite spot by the road she hid herself behind a tree and waited for him to arrive. She spotted a couple boys who always insisted on giving her love letters or poems. They walked past without guessing the object of their infatuation was near. She was already feeling thirsty again despite having already had some tomato juice this morning. She could feel her legs shaking just a little and leaned against the tree for support. It had been about three weeks since she'd last had any of his blood. Her anemia and her thirst were slowly getting worse.

Tsukune had no idea how much it affected her or just how much she *really* wanted to drink his blood. She was very careful to hide the effects whenever he was around. She didn't want him to worry or to feel guilty. No matter how bad it got she was determined to never drink from him again. Her bite marks were still there on his throat, faded and partially healed, but visible. Even if it meant she had to suffer she didn't want to do anything to hurt him ever again.

As she waited the trickle of students became a stream and then a trickle again as twenty minutes passed with no sign of Tsukune. Frowning she finally left her hiding spot and headed to school without him to avoid being late.

As soon as she arrived at homeroom she noted his empty seat.

Kurumu spotted her arrival and looked up questioningly when only she entered. "Where's Tsukune?"

"I don't know," Moka said and took her seat beside his empty one. "I waited but never saw him."

Kurumu looked unhappy. "Tsukune doesn't usually miss class," she said quietly.

What was left unsaid was the fact that at Youkai academy being absent was often the first sign of greater trouble.

All the girls attended class as usual.

Tsukune never arrived.

Moka decided to skip newspaper club. She was going to check on his room, and if he wasn't there she would check at the infirmary.

On a lonely stretch of the road she encountered six boys who were waiting for her. None of them bothered to wear the school uniform, and none of them had any love letters for her. One of them with short cropped platinum blond hair and a scar stepped forward.

"We have your boyfriend Tsukune," he said. "If you want to see him come with us."

Surrounded and unable to remove her rosario she meekly nodded and let them lead her into the forest.

"Moka's not in her room and no one's seen her since class. Desu!"

"No one has seen Tsukune since yesterday," Mizore said around her lollipop.

"So they're both missing?" Kurumu said. "This is bad."

Following club the three girls had all headed back to the dorms to meet with Moka and find out if she had seen Tsukune. Having them both disappear now worried the girls. Tsukune was the sweetest kindest boy she'd ever met. That didn't mean he hadn't made his share of enemies since arriving here. Likewise the pink haired Moka

was also a gentle soul, but her alter ego had bruised both egos and bodies aplenty since school started.

"All right, you two try and search for them, I'm going to go talk to someone." She immediately left.

"Who are you going to talk to?" Mizore called out.

Kurumu kept going without answering.

Naruto was in his dorm room relaxing after another sadistic training session with Kuyou. He was surprised by a loud rapping sound, coming not from his door but from his window. Getting up from his bed he spotted Kurumu hovering outside his window. A pair of five foot long leathery wings were flapping behind her as a pointed tail swished back and forth in agitation.

Well you don't see that every day, he thought. He opened up his window. "Can I help you?"

Without an invitation she folded up her wings and stepped into his room. "This may be stupid, but I need to ask you something."

"What?"

She knew the other girls would think she was nuts for doing this, but she honestly didn't think Naruto was a bad person even wearing that black uniform. "Tsukune and Moka are both missing; do you know anything about it?"

"What the hell makes you think I would know anything?"

"Your boss Kuyou kidnapped Tsukune once and tried to kill him. I wouldn't put it past him to have gone after him again and Moka too."

Naruto shook his head. "Kuyou thought he was human and was trying to do his duty as he saw it. Once he realized he wasn't that

was the end of it."

Kurumu frowned and looked at him suspiciously.

Annoyed Naruto looked back stonily. "You can believe me or not but that's the truth. I don't know anything about what happened to them."

"Fine," she said. "I guess I believe you. But that means I'll have to start searching for them and pray I find them."

"Want some help?"

She again looked at him suspiciously.

"What? You don't want help?"

"Why would you help us? I mean I don't think Kuyou would be too sad if something happened to my friends, especially not to Tsukune."

"I joined the Police Committee for my own reasons, I don't agree with Kuyou about a lot of things. Tsukune and Moka aren't exactly friends, but they're not enemies either. I'll help you find them. I even have a trick that might be useful."

"If... if you're really serious then okay, I'll take all the help I can get." She *thought* she could trust him. But that black uniform did make her hesitate.

"Here, this is something I've just learned." He told her. He shut his eyes and concentrated for a moment.

Standing there Kurumu felt a sliver of demonic aura surround him. Compared to what she would normally feel around Moka as she transformed it wasn't much, but it was definitely noticeable. She watched as the scars on Naruto's cheeks thickened and his teeth grew fangs and his hands transformed into claws. When his eye lids popped open his eyes were red and slitted like any vampires.

Kurumu took a half step back. "Wha... are, are you a youkai kitsune?" In this state he didn't look like a pure one like Kuyou, more like a mongrel breed with a little fox in the mix.

"A youkai kitsune?" His voice was deeper than it had been a moment before. "Sure, why not? That's probably as close as any other description. By the way, what are you?"

"I'm a succubus," she said proudly.

Naruto shrugged indifferently and moved towards the open window. Closing his eyes again he took a couple deep breaths of air through his nostrils. "I've got Tsukune's scent."

"Moka," Tsukune gasped. "Are you all right?"

"I'm... I'm fine Tsukune," she lied.

"Everything is going to be fine," he told her with a false smile.

"I know it will be," she replied.

Neither of them would show any doubt in front of the other no matter how serious the situation.

At the moment Tsukune was suspended ten feet in the air by his wrists. An iron chain and handcuffs ran down from an old steel rafter. He hung in the air helpless, his arms aching from hours of this painful treatment.

By comparison Moka was bound by simple ropes, but was in an even more painful and hopeless position. She was lying in an old copper tub half filled with water. Energy crackled all around her painfully as her vampire power was drawn out of her. Every moment in contact with the water was agony for her.

They were in some old abandoned warehouse a couple miles from the academy. About fifteen outcast ayashi lounged about talking or playing cards. They evidently no longer saw them as any kind of threat. The only one keeping an eye on them was their leader.

"I guess Saizou was right," Midou said looking up at the dangling Tsukune. "All those rumors about you were all lies weren't they?" He nodded to Moka. "She was the one who won all your fights. A vampire is truly a powerful creature, but not one without weaknesses, huh?"

"Where's Saizou?" Tsukune asked. When he'd disappeared following their last ruin in he'd assumed he had run away.

"He's dead and buried," Midou said without concern. "If you want I'll show you his grave before we're done, I'll probably end up burying you next to him."

"Why... are you doing this?" Moka asked though her pain.

"I'm following orders from my leader. The two of you have become dangerous wildcards and the leader wanted you out of the way. Anti-thesis has big plans and he doesn't want any surprises." Midou told them.

"Anti-thesis you say?" A voice growled. "Now that's interesting! Since you're the leader here I'll bring you in to Kuyou. That should make him happy for awhile."

Midou and all his men turned to see a blonde in a black Police Committee uniform walking in through the unguarded entrance. They were all facing him and wary, the Committee was the academy's elite and their reputation was a bloody one.

"You're Naruto," Midou said as he transformed. His right arm became mammoth and hardened as his face and other parts of him changed giving him a grotesque appearance. His men followed his

lead and turned into their true forms as well. "You killed one of my men; I've been waiting for a chance to pay you back for that."

Grinning Naruto stretched his clawed hands and looked at all of them. He could tell they had no discipline at all. They were just thugs. He was sure they were tough and brave and that they could all fight. Just as he was sure they had no idea of how to fight as a team and maximize their abilities. They hadn't even posted a guard on the front door which was as basic as it got. "Looks to me like I'll be killing a whole bunch more today. One and only chance to surrender, otherwise I'll kill all of you except for your leader."

"That's pretty brave with just one of you here against all of us." Midou told him.

Laughing he began to run through some hand signs. "I am *never* alone. I can be one or a thousand. **Kage Bunshin no Jutsu!**"

The entire warehouse filled momentarily with smoke. When a breeze blew and cleared it away the ayashi cried out. They were now surrounded by hundreds of the same man.

"Want to give up now?" The question came from hundreds of voices.

"It's a trick!" Midou shouted before any of his men could decide to quit. "You know what they'll do to us if we give up!"

That decided things. No one wanted to end up in the custody of the Police Committee; *especially* not if you were actually guilty. With a howl the ayashi rushed forward to be met by hundreds of blade wielding bunshins. They were cut to pieces and butchered.

The real Naruto ran forward to face their leader one to one. He covered his body in red chakra, a single tail swinging in place.

"Yaaaah!" Midou screamed and swung his huge arm with all his might down on his opponent's head. Such a blow had killed every

enemy he'd ever fought, it was his final killing strike meant to flatten a head and reduce it to goo.

His punch hit Naruto on the top of his head and bounced off.

Naruto smiled. "That all you got?" He delivered a single punch into Midou's stomach and sent him flying across the warehouse into a steel girder.

"Tha... thank you," Moka said as a clone lifted her up out of the tub.

"Ah! Thanks!" Tsukune said as he was lowered to the ground and his handcuffs carefully broken.

"You're welcome," Naruto said. "Let's try to not make this a habit though, okay?" His original self turned to look at a weakened and shivering Moka. "You all right?"

She nodded. Tsukune was at her side using his own jacket to help dry her off.

"Tsukune! Moka! Are you okay?" Kurumu shouted as she ran in.

Most of the clones were gone now. Only a handful were still present to help with Moka and Tsukune and to carry an unconscious Midou off to Police Committee Headquarters. All along the floor were the torn open and bloody bodies of Naruto's enemies. While he had saved her friends she could not fail to notice his brutal methods. He clearly thought nothing at all of killing.

"I think we need to get Moka to the infirmary," Tsukune said ignoring his own bloodied wrists and other wounds.

"I'll be... be fine Tsukune, as soon as I dry off," she told him wearily.

With his job done Naruto turned to go. Kurumu though grabbed him by the arm before he could go.

"Thank you Naruto," Kurumu said. "You saved my friends lives."

"You're welcome," he answered simply. He really wanted to go.

"Tomorrow during lunch why don't you come and sit with us?" She asked him.

He gave her a warm smile and carefully detached her from his arm.

"No thanks," he said. "I prefer to eat alone."

He quickly left with his prisoner before she could say anything more.

Arrests

There was a gentle hiss and the scent of burning meat.

"Arrrrrrgh," Midou cried out and snapped shut his teeth.

"You are simply prolonging the inevitable," Kuyou told him as he happily placed the poker back in the flames. "I want the names of everyone in Anti-thesis, the sooner you talk the sooner your suffering ends."

Midou looked back at him and simply gritted his teeth. He was naked and chained to the wall. His arms, chest, and legs were already a mass of red burn scars. So far he had divulged nothing under torture but Kuyou knew it was only a matter of time. Apply pressure long enough and even the hardest stone would break.

"Anyone ever tell you that you like this a little too much?" Naruto asked. "No, make that a lot too much."

Kuyou turned to the other person in the damp cell. "Is this too much for you? Does it make you ill?"

"You're kidding right? Do you think I could handle our little 'training' sessions if that were so? I just don't think it's good to enjoy other peoples' pain so much."

"We all have our little pleasures," Kuyou answered. "And my actions serve a greater good. I will get every last name out of him along with everything he knows about Anti-thesis. And then we will discuss what he knows about Tsukune."

"Tsukune? What the hell has he got to do with Anti-thesis? He was their *victim*, him and Moka."

"So you have said," Kuyou replied. "I know Tsukune is not a member of Anti-thesis, I am interested in other matters."

"Like what?" Naruto demanded.

Kuyou frowned. "I don't believe I care for your tone."

"Tough," Naruto muttered. "What's your problem with Tsukune anyway? Can't stand not having a perfect record?"

"The guilty must not be allowed to escape punishment," Kuyou said. "Those who break the laws and disturb the peace must be punished, always!"

"Just out of curiosity what law did he break?"

"He broke the first, most basic, law of this academy; he entered it as a human. For that he must die."

"Wait a second; didn't you *already* prove he wasn't human?"

"He demonstrated great power; he seemed to have as much power as a vampire as a matter of fact."

"Then what's the problem?"

Kuyou grinned. "According to *your* own words Tsukune was kept prisoner using nothing more than some handcuffs and chains. No water, no seals, and no special charms. If he were truly an S-ranked monster such feeble restraints could never have held him."

"But weren't you the one who saw his power before?"

"It is possible to temporarily grant a human power with an infusion of blood. And during the time I witnessed Tsukune's remarkable transformation the vampire Moka just happened to be present. I suspect that if I can interrogate Tsukune alone without her interference I will find the truth."

"At which point you'll kill him?"

"If he is human then yes, of course." Kuyou eyed him closely. "Is that a problem?"

Naruto snorted. "As if I care."

Nodding Kuyou took out another red hot poker and got back to work.

Hokuto was surprised by the knock at the door to his room. "Enter."

The door knob turned and the door opened.

"Sorry for disturbing you," Kiria said. "But there's been a situation." As usual he was calmly reading even as he spoke. "I'm afraid that Midou's been captured by the Police Committee. That means as sure as the sun will rise he's being tortured by Kuyou right now."

"I see," Hokuto answered slowly. "That is a problem."

"Midou may be tough and loyal, but he won't last long."

"No... I don't suppose he will. Kuyou is rather thorough about these things."

Kiria nodded, never taking his eyes from his book. "What do you want to do?"

"Well there are only two options; go forward with the plan immediately, or escape while we still can."

"Going forward is impossible," Kiria said. "I'm not even sure the Chairman is on campus right now. There's no way for us to be sure we can get the rosario of judgment."

"I know," Hokuto said with a resigned shrug. "I guess it's time for us to go. It's too bad, I'm sure it would have worked too. But there's more than none way for me to get my revenge."

"What do you want to do about the organization?" Kiria asked.

"Contact Mako, she can escape with us. Her abilities will be of great use."

"And all the others?"

"They don't matter, they were always expendable."

Kiria calmly nodded. "I'll go fetch Mako, let's meet at the usual spot in thirty minutes."

As Hokuto swiftly gathered a few things together he was caught off guard by a strong feeling of sadness. He was actually feeling gloom at the thought of leaving this place. He'd hated it here, he'd been abused and hurt and nearly killed more than once. He'd come in hopes of a fresh start only to find the same mindless brutality he'd tried to escape from. He'd been planning to destroy this place and everyone in it, to wash them away in a river of blood.

Yet this was where he'd met Kiria, his one and only friend. It was where he'd gained acceptance and even admiration. Even if the persona he'd created had been nothing but a lie he had still enjoyed receiving the praise and trust of his fellow students.

His lips twisted in a bitter grin, he understood just how foolish it was to have such conflicting thoughts about a place you were trying to destroy. *Well, there are other places and other battles.*

Moka opened her eyes.

She was lying in a bed in the infirmary. She had told Tsukune over and over that she just needed to rest and she would be fine. Unfortunately she had passed out shortly after being freed. It seemed that Tsukune had decided to bring her here rather than back to her dorm room.

She had no idea what time it was beyond 'late.' The room was dark and the world beyond her single window was pitch black. But even in

the darkness she had no trouble making out the slumped form asleep in the chair beside her. Tsukune was quietly snoring. And though asleep his hand was clasped to hers.

When he had been here suffering from the effects of her blood she had stayed close by his side. Now he was at her side. Even though she knew it was foolish it made her feel very, very happy. *Thank you Tsukune, thank you for caring about me.*

Giving his hand a gentle squeeze she drifted back into a peaceful sleep.

As Moka had promised she made a full recovery after just a little bit of rest. The doctor confirmed her condition and released her in time to get to that day's classes with Tsukune.

So they were there when it happened.

They were walking from fourth period to fifth through the always crowded halls when a tall brown haired boy in a black uniform stepped out and smashed his fist into his target's face, knocking him down with a broken and bleeding nose.

"You're under arrest scum!" He shouted happily and lifted the boy with a single arm.

Moka and Tsukune froze. The boy had been walking just a few feet ahead of them and hadn't done anything they could see. The other students pressed themselves against the walls to get out of the way and looked down to avoid the eyes of the Police Committee member.

From the first floor there were shouts. Tsukune and Moka looked out over the second floor railing down into the wide hallway below. As they watched several more students were viciously attacked and beaten by other students in black uniforms. They did not fail to notice that many of these looked to be Naruto. Kuyou was there too, two

students bleeding and unconscious at his feet. He tossed them over his shoulder and walked out, the regular students making a wide berth for him.

"What's going on?" Tsukune whispered.

Moka held on tight to his arm. "The Police Committee are arresting a bunch of people," she said just loud enough for him to hear.

"Why? What did they do?"

"I don't know," she answered fearfully. She began tugging at his arm and pulled him away from the rail. "Let's get to class."

The other students put their heads down and hurried off to class as well. They could sense being in the hall was not a good idea.

Tsukune was very glad to have Moka in the same class with him. Shortly after the fifth period bell had rung there was an announcement over the PA. All students were to remain in their current classrooms until further notice. No one was allowed to leave the classroom even with a teacher's permission.

The students all looked at each other nervously, none of them dared to talk above a whisper. The teacher tried to pretend nothing unusual was happening and carried on with the day's lesson. It was a wasted effort as no one seemed to pay even the slightest attention. From the class across the hall there were shouts and the sounds of struggle. A couple students got up to go to the door but the teacher waved them back.

They heard pleas coming from the hall and angry voices demanding silence.

All the students eyed on another and eyed the door, wondering if it would open and if the Police would come for them too.

Sitting next to one another Moka reached out her hand and Tsukune took it. They kept their hands together through that endless class period.

Shortly before fifth period was to end there was another announcement over the PA. The remainder of class was ended and all after school clubs and activities were cancelled. All students were to return to their dorms and remain there until further notice. There was a curfew in effect until the following morning.

He and Moka ran into the other girls on the way back. They all wanted him to stay in their dorm that night (which room in the dorm was in dispute) so they could protect him just in case. Tsukune was just relieved to see all the girls were all right. No one seemed to know what the hell the Police Committee was doing or who they were after. Even the teachers seemed to be nervous. Tsukune decided it would be safest for him and everyone if he stayed in his own room. He escorted the girls to their dorm before returning to his own.

Everyone in the dorm was quiet. The usual fun and loose atmosphere of boys under minimal supervision was nowhere to be seen. Everyone was quiet, everyone kept their eyes down, as if afraid they might see something that would get them in trouble.

Tsukune was relieved to get to his room and lock his door.

"Took you awhile."

"Eeek!" Tsukune jumped and turned about to see Naruto sitting calmly at his desk. "Naruto! How did you get in my room?"

Naruto leaned back in the seat with an easy smile. "Getting into a locked room isn't hard for me; I've been doing it since I was eleven. I don't even need a jutsu."

Jutsu? "Wha... what are you doing here?"

"I'm sorry for disturbing you like this, but I really need to ask you something."

"What?"

"Are you human?"

Moka's plan

Tsukune stood there looking dazed and more than a little scared. Then he began to laugh nervously. "A human? Me? Don't be ridiculous, of course I'm a monster."

Naruto stood up. "Wow, well I'm convinced."

Tsukune took a step back and bumped into the closed door.

"Relax Tsukune I didn't come here to hurt you, if I had you never would have made it back to your dorm."

That relieved him, but only a little. "Then why are you here?"

"Well since I've saved your life twice now I just thought it would be a real shame to let all that effort go to waste. Listen," Naruto said.

"Kuyou suspects you're a human. Whatever it is he saw the first time he arrested you he thinks if you really were that there's no way you could have been held by Anti-thesis as easily as you were. He plans to arrest you and find out for sure."

"He's coming here to arrest me?!"

Naruto motioned for him to calm down. "Not **today** he's not. He's pretty adamant about giving you his full attention and right now he has a lot on his plate. But once he's done with Anti-thesis he'll be coming for you."

Tsukune paled and his whole body began to shake. Having been arrested by Kuyou once before he had no illusions as to what would happen. "What am I supposed to do?"

"Well since you're a monster it's not really a problem... right? All you have to do is transform when he comes to arrest you and that will be that. Of course *if* you really were a human I'd suggest leaving, and leaving soon. You've got a few days, that's all."

"Leave? But... but if I leave I... I won't be able to come back, ever."
How can I leave Moka and the others?

"Gee, when you say it like that it sounds like you really *are* a human." Naruto looked at him knowingly. "Look, I can't really help you with Kuyou; I shouldn't even be giving you this warning. You know what's coming; do with that what you want."

There was a puff of smoke and he was gone. Tsukune was left alone in his room to ponder just what he should do.

The next day everything at the school seemed back to normal. On the way into class the students had all been a bit wary, but after homeroom people all seemed to naturally relax. By lunchtime everyone was as cheerful and loud as usual. Tsukune doubted a human high school would react the same way, then again an ordinary high school wouldn't have seen even a hundredth of the things this place had. Monsters just seemed to accept violence as a part of everyday life. People were beaten, went missing, were killed, and everything just kept going right along. He'd never seen it himself but he was sure that if a student were killed or went missing in a human school classes would stop for at least a day, maybe longer. If you did that at Youkai there wouldn't be any classes.

I've become the same way, Tsukune suddenly realized. *When I first got here Naruto's message would have sent me packing for the bus stop in a minute flat. Now even though I'm scared I'm not sure what I should do.* He looked at Moka.

He was having lunch with her, Kurumu, and Yukari. (He was sure Mizore was somewhere nearby in the bushes or under a table.) While he cared about, and wanted to be with, all his friends it was Moka he couldn't bear to leave behind. The idea of never seeing her beautiful face again made his heart ache.

Moka noticed the way he was looking at her and her cheeks began to blush. "Tsukune, is something wrong?"

Kurumu was frowning, she'd noticed it too. "What are you spacing out for?"

Well I guess now would be the time to tell them. "I had a visit from Naruto yesterday. He told me that..."

Twenty one former students of Youkai academy were down in the cells now. Twenty one former people who were now just corpses waiting to die. Kuyou had judged them and condemned them; none of them would ever see the sun again. Naruto was in one of those cells now doing his part with the interrogations. Kuyou wanted to know everything he could wring out of every last one of them. As he worked other members of the Police Committee were always nearby with pen and paper drawing up the lists. Lists of crimes, lists of victims, and most important of all, lists of other conspirators.

More people would be arrested; more people would disappear never to be seen again. There would be no more mass arrests made at the school. That had been a onetime event. Kuyou had been scared most of his victims would run as soon as they heard about the arrests, and so had decided to get them all at once. The leaders of Anti-thesis (including the Student Committee President) had been smart enough to get away.

Naruto doubted many of the people on those lists would still be around. If they had any sense they would already be far away.

"This is all thanks to you Naruto," Kuyou told him.

"Thanks." Naruto realized that the people now being tortured and locked into the cages where they would slowly expire were guilty, and deserved to be punished. But even for a ninja the way it was being done left a poor taste in his mouth.

Kuyou grinned at his student's reluctance. "I think you've earned a reward. When all this is over how would you like to go on a *special* training session?"

That did get his interest. "What do you have in mind? Flaming red hot pokers up the ass this time?"

"Only if you want," Kuyou said dryly. "What I had in mind though was talking you somewhere you can cut loose with all your power. How does that sound?"

Back in Konoha there were training grounds set aside that only ninja were permitted to enter. There they were allowed to experiment with new jutsus or train using their full power without concern for damage they might cause. Konoha had a special unit of engineering ninja tasked with repairing and maintaining the terrain. Youkai academy had nothing comparable; he could walk into the woods and use his full power. But there would be the danger of an innocent bystander accidentally entering the danger zone. And if he destroyed a couple of square miles of forest they would remain barren. A couple dozen training sessions would likely flatten all the foliage surrounding the academy. As a result he'd had no chance to practice using any of his more powerful jutsus.

"Sounds good, is this place very far away?"

"Yes and no," Kuyou replied. "In one sense it's no more than a couple miles from here, in another it's a world away. It's a paradise where you can fight to your heart's content."

"Sounds fun."

"Kuyou's going to arrest you again?!" Moka cried.

"Shhhh! Not so loud Moka-chan!" Tsukune said. "And yes that was what Naruto told me. He also said I had a few days to leave the academy if I wanted to."

"Leave? But you can't Tsukune!" Moka said.

"That is right!" Yukari argued. "How can we have our lovely threesome if you go away?"

"Titless has a point," Kurumu said.

"Hey!" Yukari shouted.

"You can't leave Tsukune," Kurumu continued ignoring the outburst. "If you run away Kuyou will take that as proof that you really are human! You'll never be able to come back!"

"But the problem is I *am* human, if Kuyou arrests me again it won't be hard for him to prove that, then I'm a goner."

"We would never let that happen!" Kurumu declared.

"Desu! The top heavy dummy is right!" (Kurumu glared daggers.)
"We'll protect you Tsukune!"

Mizore popped her head out from under a nearby table. "Tsukune, you were arrested by Kuyou before and survived. What happened that time?"

"That time Moka, Yukari, Kurumu, and Gin sempai all risked their lives to protect me. Moka finally injected me with some of her blood and that gave me the power of a vampire just long enough for me to beat Kuyou and convince him I really was a monster."

"Couldn't we do that again?" Mizore asked.

"No," Moka answered solemnly. "Giving a human vampire blood has... side effects and I've already given it to him more than once. If I do it again I'm afraid of what might happen."

"The side effects can't be worse than what Kuyou would do to him," Kurumu argued.

"They just might be," Moka said.

Tsukune shook his head. "It doesn't matter anyway, I won't put all of you in danger again by asking you to try and protect me from the Police Committee. The only reason we all survived last time was because we took them by surprise. We won't get that lucky a second time. I'm... I'm really sorry, but the only thing I can do is leave."

"Is that what you want Tsukune?" Moka asked.

"No! But what else can I do Moka? It's not just my life at stake. If you all fight to protect me you may end up killed! I won't risk your lives for my sake. Even though it breaks my heart, I'd rather go and know all of you are safe."

"What... what if there was another way?" Moka asked. "A way where you would be safe."

"Trust the amazing Moka to find a solution! Desu!"

Kurumu reached over and nonchalantly bonked the little witch on the head. "We don't even know what she has in mind." She turned questioningly to Moka. "So what's your plan?"

Moka looked nervously at Tsukune. "I... I could turn you into a vampire."

"WHAT?!!"

A long and painful night

His work was done and he was heading back to the boys' dorm. He would have to give Kuyou credit for one thing, he was certainly thorough. Every prisoner was interrogated and every last piece of useful information was wrung out. The Police Committee got everything they could from their prisoners.

And then got rid of them.

Naruto had, had a hand in that just as he had with the interrogations. Kuyou insisted that every member in the Committee had to take part in the 'dirty work.' He thought it important to the Committee's unity that they all did the things that had to be done. Naruto hadn't blanched or hesitated when Kuyou gave him that order. Ninja often killed innocent people and they sometimes killed prisoners when the situation called for it. He'd simply taken out his kunai and done it, killing as neatly and professionally as he could. Kuyou had looked on and nodded his approval.

"You stink of blood," a girl's voice called to him from the darkness.

He stopped and looked into the shadows where the voice had come from. "What are you doing out here Kurumu? It's not safe to be out late at night."

The girl detached herself from the darkness and came out into the moonlight where he could see her. She had on her usual school uniform and yellow vest. Underneath the moonlight though Naruto thought she looked a bit otherworldly, more an apparition than a flesh and blood person.

"You don't need to worry about me," she told him. "Despite my appearances I can take care of myself. So why do you smell of blood tonight? Or do I not want to know?"

"You definitely don't want to know, and even if you did I wouldn't tell you. Now come on, I'll walk you back to your room."

Her full lips curved slightly upwards. "Oh? You want to take me home? You hoping to get an invitation inside?" She teased with a playful grin.

He was surprised at the reaction he felt to her flirtatious words, his heart began to pick up a little and he felt some excitement at the thought of being alone with her in her room. "I just want to make sure you get home safe, that's all."

"If you say so," she said. She came to his side and wrapped herself around one of his arms, deliberately pressing her boobs against him. "Here, I'll let you protect me."

He was of course dressed in his black Police Committee uniform. As they began to walk she noticed splotches of blood here and there on his clothing. There were a lot of them.

"So why were you out here tonight?" Naruto asked. "Even if you can protect yourself going out in these woods late at night really isn't a good idea. People get killed or go missing all the time."

"I was hoping to talk to you in private without anyone else knowing. You're not that easy to reach outside of class so I just decided to wait here until you eventually headed home."

"And just what exactly is so important you needed to talk to me that badly?"

"Well, for one thing I wanted to thank you for giving Tsukune that warning. It means a lot to me that you did that."

Naruto gave her a severe frown. "Tsukune talks to damn much, I warned him not to go around telling people what I said. I don't need Kuyou finding out I tipped him off."

"You don't need to worry," Kurumu assured him. "He only told his little circle, and we won't talk to anyone."

"I certainly hope not," Naruto muttered. "Anyway has Tsukune left yet?"

"No, why would he leave?"

"Because he's human," Naruto said frankly.

"Wha... what makes you say that?" Kurumu asked nervously.

He noted it and shook his head. "Don't worry; if I was after him would I have given him that warning in the first place? But the truth is if Tsukune really were any sort of monster this wouldn't be an issue now would it? He would just show everyone what he was and that would be that."

Kurumu looked up at him. "How... how do you feel about humans?"

"Honestly? I think if you look closely enough you won't be able to tell the difference. I've known plenty of humans who were bigger monsters than Kuyou could ever dream of being." *Like me for instance.* "I mean in the end what is the difference really? Having claws? Having fangs? The desire to kill? What exactly separates humans and monsters?"

"I've never really thought about it like that, before I came here I just assumed the difference was obvious. There are monsters and there are humans. We're supposed to use them as much as we can without ever exposing ourselves. They may be weak, but they outnumber us a million to one, and their weapons are nothing to laugh at. As a little girl I grew up with stories about hidden experimental labs and burnings at the stake. Humans were always more frightening to me than any kind of monster."

"Well if it makes you feel any better human parents tell their children stories about scary monsters that eat them up."

"You know," Kurumu said. "You seem to know an awful lot about humans. It's kind of suspicious."

Grinning he tapped into just a tiny sliver of the Kyuubi's power. Kurumu gasped as she saw his eyes become red and slitted like a vampire's and his teeth grew into fangs. She could feel a terrible energy from him that she had only ever felt from Moka before. "Are you accusing me of something?"

"No!" She replied quickly. *Idiot! I've seen his power. And it's not like he could be a part of the Police Committee if he weren't a strong youkai.*

Naruto changed back and returned to his usual form. They had arrived at the girls' dorm and they were soon at the door to her room.

"You know Naruto; you're really a pretty good guy aren't you?"

He gave her a very cold look. "Do you think a good guy would wear this uniform and do the things Kuyou orders?"

"I didn't before, but I do now. You didn't need to give Tsukune that warning; it doesn't do you any good at all and might get you in trouble with Kuyou. But you still did it."

"It was nothing," he said dismissively.

"No, it was very important and I just wanted to thank you for doing that for Tsukune." Without warning Kurumu got up on her tip toes and planted a light kiss on Naruto's cheek. "Thank you Naruto-kun." She quickly ducked into her room and was gone.

Naruto stood there outside her door for a minute trying to get over the shock of having just been kissed by a girl.

There was a timid knock at his door. *I guess this is it.* Tsukune got up and opened his door. There in the hall was a very nervously looking

Moka. Her face was slightly flushed and she was pressing her index fingers together.

"Thanks for coming Moka, please come in."

"Sure," she stepped into his dorm room and he closed the door behind her. She looked around nervously. It was fairly neat given it was a boy's room. His futon was laid out with a single pillow. Being alone with him had her heart pounding. "You... you've never invited me to your room before Tsukune."

"Well, I never thought it was really appropriate before, but I decided there was something I really needed to talk to you about and it just couldn't wait."

"Is... is it what we talked about yesterday?"

He slowly nodded. "Yes Moka, it is, I don't know how much time I have before Kuyou comes to get me and so I've been thinking about what you said."

Flashback

"You want to turn me into a vampire?!"

"Tsukune! Lower your voice! Other students are listening." Kurumu told him.

Tsukune looked about and when he spoke again his voice was under control. "Moka, how can you suggest such a thing? You know how I feel about that."

Moka nodded. Not long ago she'd actually told him he should leave the academy in order to safeguard his humanity. So now she knew it had to sound strange, her suggestion her deliberately give up his humanity. "Tsukune I know you don't want to become... like me. But

honestly what other choice is there? It's too dangerous for you to stay here as a human anymore, too many people suspect you."

"I hate to say it but Moka-san is right. Desu."

"But isn't there some other less drastic choice?" He asked.

"I can't think of one," Moka replied. "Tsukune you won't be able to trick Kuyou. If you're going to stay you will have to become a monster."

Tsukune looked at her and paled. "If I become a vampire its permanent isn't it? I mean there's no going back. I could never go home again or be with my family."

"You could with one of these Tsukune," Moka touched her rosario. "Remember I lived in the human world for a number of years and no one even suspected I was anything other than human."

He thought about that. Anyone who met Moka in her sealed form would take her for a beautiful young human girl. The only things that might give her away were her incredible strength and her habit of drinking blood. Otherwise she fit in perfectly.

"I guess that's true," he admitted. "But I would still stop being human. I'd be something else."

Moka nodded. "I'm sorry but it's the only option I can give you."

"Like I said I've been thinking about it a lot." Tsukune said. "And you're right if I want to stay it's the only way." He took a deep breath and looked at the nervous vampire. "I've decided I need to make my decision tonight, whether to stay or go. But before I can decide there's something I need to know from you."

"What is it Tsukune?"

"Moka-chan, please tell me honestly, how do you feel for me?"

"Wha... what? You already know how I feel about you; I care for you... a lot."

Tsukune reached out and gently took her shaking hands into his. "Is that all?" he asked her in a low voice that was aching.

"I... I don't understand, what are you wanting me to say?"

"I just want to know your honest feelings for me."

She put her head down. Her heart was pounding like mad in her chest and her entire body was trembling. "I... I told you, I care about you Tsukune, a lot."

"I see," he replied quietly. He slowly let go of her hands. "Then this is goodbye."

"Goodbye? Then you're... you're really..."

"I'm leaving on the bus tomorrow, I'm sorry. I'll miss you and the others terribly. Maybe we can meet again one day in the human world."

She stood there, her eyes cast down, unable to move.

"Moka? Are you all right?"

"Don't," she whispered.

"What? I didn't hear that."

"Don't go Tsukune!" She looked up at him, her eyes filled with tears. "Please don't leave me Tsukune! I love you!"

"You do?"

She desperately grabbed onto him and pressed her weeping face to his chest. "Yes! I love you! I've been in love with you since that first day! Ever since you put yourself in danger to protect me! Is that what you wanted to hear? I love you! I love you! I love you! How many times do you want to hear it?"

He put his own arms about her and squeezed her tight. "I love you too Moka-chan! I've been in love with you from the very start! I never ever want to leave your side! No matter what I want to stay with you!"

He held her protectively and allowed her to weep as much as she had to. He had needed to hear those words. He needed to know for certain that his love was returned before he could make his choice. If she loved him then he could face anything.

When her tears finally ceased she lifted her face to look up to his. He took one hand and gently wiped away her tears. "Tsukune."

"Moka-san," he replied. His lips drifted to hers.

In moments like these she would always suddenly turn her mouth to his neck and bite him. But this time her lips remained steady as his mouth touched hers and they shared a passionate first kiss.

One kiss became many as they held each other and comforted each other. Thoughts of loss and separation were replaced by the joy of this long awaited connection.

"Moka-chan, what about your other side?" He asked. "What does she think?"

"She loves you too Tsukune, though I don't think she would ever say the words." She placed her hand on her rosario and demonstrated to him that it was dormant. He'd seen it, 'awaken' and jump about frantically at the end of its chain. "If she had any objection to our declaration or to our kissing she would make herself known. She accepts your feeling for me."

"In that case Moka, will you give me your blood and make me a vampire?"

"Yes Tsukune-kun, of course." With her own fangs she bit into her wrist and set blood flowing down her arm. "The transformation is painful Tsukune, but I will stay here at your side until, it is complete."

She held up her bleeding wrist to him but he hesitated.

"Please Tsukune; you must drink as much of my blood as you can manage as fast as you can."

He hesitated a bit more but tentatively put his mouth to her wound and began to slurp the hot salty blood into his mouth.

"Yes, that's it my love," she said encouragingly and placed a hand at the back of his head. "The more of my blood you can digest the more powerful you will become. So drink my darling, drink."

At first the thought of drinking blood had repulsed him, but with the very first taste he had found it sweeter than any candy. He'd begin sucking with a real effort, using his tongue to play with cut and try to coax more blood from it. As it slipped down his throat he could feel it in his stomach. In his mouth it was sweet and delicious, in his stomach he could feel it sitting like a dead weight.

All at once he reached his fill as his stomach cried out and his throat began to choke. He let go of his girlfriend's wrist. His stomach was starting to hurt.

"You did wonderfully Tsukune! I'm very proud of you!"

He clutched his belly. He could feel the blood inside of him starting to tear his stomach. "Ah! Moka, ah my stomach, ah it huuurts!"

"I know Tsukune, I'm sorry but there's nothing I can do. The pain is a part of the transformation, nothing will help, not even morphine or

other drugs." She took his head and placed it on her lap. "Please try to bear with it as best you can."

It really felt like his body was being torn open from the inside out.
"Aaaaaaargh!"

Through the long hours of the night he suffered horrible agony while Moka provided what tiny relief she could.

In his room

Feeling weak and nauseous he felt a hand gently wiping his brow. He slowly opened his eyes and noted that morning sunlight was coming into his room. He also realized his head was resting in Moka's lap and she was wiping his brow.

"Good you're awake," she said with relief. "How do you feel?"

"Mmmm, kind of tired, and really hungry too."

She nodded. "That's normal; while you were asleep I went to the infirmary and got you something." She reached over to a small ice chest that had been sitting behind her. "It's not as food as fresh but it will help restore your strength. I'd let you have mine but now that you've turned you'll find a vampire's blood too bitter to stand." She opened up the ice box and took out a plastic IV bag. The blood inside of it looked almost black. She tore off a plastic stopper at the bottom of the bag and handed it to him. "Drink up."

He took the bag from her and stared at it, his mind was a little fuzzy. What had happened last night? Had he gotten sick? Why was Moka here in his room? And why was she handing him a plastic container filled with *blood* ? "Moka, what are you saying? I can't drink blood."

Smiling she helped ease him up to a sitting position. "Just give it a sniff."

"Huh?"

"Just smell it, trust me."

He didn't understand what difference it would make, but he didn't want to be rude to her. He brought the open part of the bag to his nose and sniffed.

The salty scent of blood made his mouth water.

Without thinking about it he put the stopper in his mouth and carefully squeezed the bag. A jet of cold blood flowed into his mouth and down his throat. Instinctively he somehow knew this would taste better hot. He had a sudden mental image of drinking blood from someone's (Moka's?) wrist. He didn't really think about what it was he was doing; he just acted on instinct, the need to feed and sate his hunger.

As he sucked down the contents of the bag Moka remained kneeling by his side. She gently patted the back of his head encouraging him. "That's it my darling, drink it all. Every last bit. It will help you."

He didn't need the words of encouragement. Once he tasted he wasn't sure he *could* have stopped until the bag was dry.

When he had sucked out every last drop he could he dropped the empty bag and started thinking about what he'd just done. "Moka-san what's happened to me?"

"How much do you remember from last night?" She asked. She took out a pocket mirror from her bag.

He stopped and thought about it. "I remember being in pain, was I sick?"

"Do you remember before that?" Moka asked.

"I remember you coming over to my room and... crying, and telling me you loved me."

"Yes, I did say that," she caressed his cheek. "And you told me you loved me."

He nodded and looked at her, she was so beautiful. "Yeah I did, and we... we..."

"Kissed," she said happily. "We finally kissed and confessed our love to one another. And do you remember what came after that?"

He did. "I asked for your blood," he said in a quiet voice.

"That's right Tsukune, you asked me to make you a vampire." She opened the pocket mirror and showed him his reflection. "And I did."

He took the little mirror from her and stared into the face that was inside it. It was his face, but not. His skin was much, much paler than it had been. His hair seemed to have grown a couple inches and had become a silver a couple shades dark than inner Moka's. His eyes were red and slitted just like inner Moka's and he now had a pair of long fangs jutting out of his mouth. He tenderly reached in and touched them with his fingers.

"I... I really am a vampire now."

"Are you upset?" Moka asked nervously.

He deliberately closed the mirror and handed it back to her. "No, I made my decision and I'm fine with it." He looked at her and smiled. "I didn't want to leave your side no matter what."

"I'm glad to hear that Tsukune," she said. *Especially since there's no way to go back.* "Tsukune, if you feel up to it could you remove my rosario? My other self wants to speak to you."

"Ah, is she angry with me?"

"No, of course not, if she'd had any objection she would have made it clear before I gave you our blood. But since this is going to affect her too she wants to talk to you."

"Ah, okay," he reached out and pulled off the rosario.

He watched as demonic energy filled the air around him and the sweet and gentle Moka was transformed into her true form. The frightening and powerful vampire form. When the change was complete she looked over to him with a blank, unreadable

expression. He was still seated on the floor while she was kneeling at his side.

Not being able to guess what she was thinking was more than a little unnerving. "Ah, hello Moka-san, it's good to see you again."

"It is good to see you as well Tsukune," with one finger she traced the line of his jaw before sliding it down along his neck. This slight touch seemed almost intimate. "Especially given how you look now. You look very... appealing."

"Really?" he answered nervously. "So... you're not upset?"

She lifted a single feathery eyebrow. "Why would I be upset? Last night was not the first time I have shared my precious blood with you. Even though I was not present I would have made my objection clear had I opposed turning you."

"Well I have to say I'm really relieved to hear that. So, ah, just how *do* you feel about me being a vampire now?"

Her lips turned into a knowing grin. "Are you expecting me to suddenly burst out with cries of, 'I love you. I love you?' Is *that* what you're expecting?"

"Ah no! Of course not! I mean I realize that you and the other Moka are totally different personalities."

"That's right Tsukune, and by now you should also know that words do not impress me, only actions." She violently grabbed him and pushed him down to the floor, pressing him down beneath her. As she held him there her mouth was mashed down into his, her tongue already in his mouth eagerly teasing his own. It was a passionate forceful kiss, a rough kiss. A kiss that was meant to show him that he belonged to her now.

When she finally came up for air they were both breathing hard. "*That* should tell you what I think of you Tsukune, more than any

words could."

He could feel her thigh deliberately rubbing his crotch and getting a reaction from him. She had already tossed aside her school jacket and was busy unbuttoning his shirt.

"Mo... Moka-san, what are you doing?" He asked in a panicked whisper.

Her tongue ran along the side of his throat and up to his ear. "I'm doing just what you think I'm doing. The thing we both want."

"But... but isn't this kind of fast? I... I mean you would hit me if I even touched you by accident."

She had undone his shirt and was slowly running her fingertips along the length of his muscled chest. She was smiling down at him with this *sinful* look in her eyes. "Tsukune, if I had actually hated you touching me I would have killed you for doing so. I punished you not because your touches were unwelcome, but because my vampire pride would not permit me to be groped by a human."

"And, now?" He asked weakly. What she was doing was starting to feel *really* good.

"Now you are a vampire, I can now accept you as my equal. Do you remember when I told you once that if you wanted this body I was the one you would have to seduce?"

"Yeah," he replied. "You said it was impossible."

"For a human it would be, but not for a vampire." She began to place little teasing kisses along his chest. "So then do you want to seduce me?"

"What happens if I touch you somewhere you don't like? Are you going to try and kill me?"

"Perhaps," she said and bit down a little on one of his nipples. "But it wouldn't be near as fun if there weren't some danger to it."

"If we don't get to class soon we'll be late," he muttered.

"Let's play hooky Tsukune," she said teasingly. "Let's be naughty."

Her teasing was driving him insane. Not caring what happened he slipped both hands beneath her skirt and grabbed a hold of her ass and gave it a hard squeeze. Moka let out a low groan and rubbed her thigh more forcefully against him. Excited by her reaction he used his own strength to flip her on her back so he was now the one on top. He began kissing her as his hands massaged her breasts beneath her school uniform.

She did not become angry or demand that he stop. She responded to him and her own hands and mouth encouraged him.

"Where are those two?" Kurumu asked fearfully.

"I'm sure they're both fine, desu."

The two of them were having lunch with Mizore presumably hidden somewhere nearby.

"How can you say that?" Kurumu said. "The last time they were both missing it was because they were taken by Anti-thesis. They almost died!"

"But Antithesis is gone now," Yukari pointed out.

"They might have been attacked by someone else, or by Kuyou."

"If it were Kuyou he would have said something." Yukari pointed to where Naruto was sitting by himself in his usual spot beneath a tree having lunch.

"That's only if he knew, Kuyou might not have told him when he planned to act." She made a decision and got up from the table.

"Where are you going?" Yukari called as she ran off.

"I'm going to check on them!" she called back. If she hurried she would only miss earth science it wasn't like she was going to learn anything if she went any way.

She checked Tsukune's room first. He was always the one she worried about the most. He was her destined one and the person she had willingly given her heart to. She wanted to be sure he was all right.

She had tried the door before knocking and was surprised to find it wasn't locked. She opened it and stepped into his room.

There on the floor were Tsukune and inner Moka. Their clothes had been tossed all over the room. A small corner of her mind registered that Tsukune's hair was now silver and his skin had become paler. It seemed he had decided to become a vampire and accept Moka's offer. Under other circumstances that would have made her very happy. Right now though that wasn't what her mind was focusing on.

They were both naked; their bodies glistened and tangled together. The room seemed to reek of sweat and of a woman's sex. They were both just lying there asleep, comfortable in each other's arms.

For a second she thought of changing into her true form and murdering them, cutting them to pieces with her razor sharp claws. She found herself want to stab him again and again and again. She wanted to make him feel the kind of pain she was feeling right now.

She stood there for a moment trembling, unable to move. The only sound a tiny whimper as the hot tears began to run down her cheeks.

In the end she backed out of the room and silently shut the door. She then ran away as quickly as she could.

A little bit of comfort

The knock on her door made her look up.

"Kurumu? Are you in there?"

Naruto? Why is he here? He wasn't the first person to knock on her door. Mizore and Yukari had come by earlier. They'd knocked and called for a good while but she had ignored them and they had eventually given up. She slid the blanket over her head and decided to ignore him too.

He kept knocking and calling for her for another couple minutes. Then...

Click. She heard her door swing open and the lights in her room came on. "What's the problem?" Naruto asked sounding annoyed. He came into her dorm room and shut the door behind him.

She tossed aside the blankets and sat up in her bed. "Hey! What the hell are you doing in my room?!"

"Oh please, I was picking locks and going where I shouldn't by the time I was eight. Any way your friends came looking for me, they wanted me to make sure you were all right. They said you came back to class just long enough to tell them Tsukune and Moka were safe and then you left. They both said you seemed in a daze."

"I'm fine! Get out and leave me alone!"

He didn't move. "Have you been crying?" He asked quietly.

"Wha... what? N... no I... why would I..."

"I just ask because your eyes are really red, it sure looks like you've been crying."

She sat there on her bed silent and defeated. The truth was she had been crying. After what she'd seen she'd somehow held it together long enough to tell the others Moka and Tsukune were all right and make it back here. The moment she'd made it safely back to the privacy of her room she'd begun to weep though. That was all she'd been doing since.

"I'm fine, please just go," she said wearily.

Naruto hesitated a bit. *I just came here to make sure she was safe, that's all. It's not like I really care.* "Well... all right," he turned to leave. "If you want I'll go, but if you ever want to talk I'll listen." *Why did I say that? Idiot!*

He was about to go when she spoke. "Naruto?"

"Yes?"

She looked down at the floor. "Am I a bad person?"

"What?" He turned back to look at her. She was drawn up on her bed hugging her knees to her chest. "What are you talking about?"

"Am I a bad person?" She repeated in a small voice. "I... I really loved him. I told him so a hundred times and I did everything I could think of to show him my honest feelings. I'd have done anything for him, anything! He was my destined one, my one true love; he was the one I was supposed to have my children with, the one I was supposed to spend my whole life with. I gave him my whole heart and the only thing I ever wanted was for him to love me, that's all." She looked up at him; fresh tears were running down her cheeks. "So why didn't he?"

He sat down beside her and put his arms around her. He held her as she wept into his shoulder. It wasn't something he chose to do, somehow or other he just did it. With one hand he slowly stroked the back of her head. "You're a good girl Kurumu-chan."

"Then... then why?" She sobbed. "Why doesn't he love me?"

"I don't know," he answered honestly. "We don't get to pick who we fall in love with. No matter how much you may care for someone you can't make them feel the same. I know what it's like to honestly love someone and have them love someone else no matter what you do or say."

"No you don't," she said. "There's no way you could know what this feels like."

He let out a painful sigh. "There was a girl named Sakura. I met her when I was seven, on my first day at school. She had pretty pink hair, amazing green eyes, and the cutest smile I'd ever seen. I liked her right from the start and tried to get her to be friends with me. When I got a little older I tried to get her to go out with me. But no matter what I did I never had a chance, she was completely in love with someone else, a boy named Sasuke."

"Wait; is this the girl you told me about? The one who was killed by your best friend?"

"Yeah, that's right, but he wasn't always my best friend. Truth to tell I really hated him for a long time. He was everything I wasn't; he was everything I wanted to be. In time though we all became good friends. But even after that nothing changed, I loved Sakura, Sakura loved Sasuke, and Sasuke didn't love anyone. Then one day Sasuke left the village and Sakura came to me crying begging me to bring him back no matter what. That was the moment I finally understood."

"Understood? Understood what?"

Naruto looked at her sadly. "That she would never love me. We were close and she really cared about me, but her heart would always be his. Even though I still loved her I began to accept the fact that she would just never love me the same way, the way I wanted. When... when she... died I told her I loved her and she said she loved me too. I wish..." he stopped unable to continue.

"You wish you could have heard that sooner," she said. She slipped her own arms around him and embraced him. "You wonder if she really loved you or if she said it because it was the end?"

"Ye... yeah."

"I'm sure she really loved you Naruto. I don't doubt it and you shouldn't either. You're really very kind."

"Thanks."

He was very warm. It had been so long since she'd hugged someone and felt them hug her back. It was just so comforting to feel his arms around her and have him really care. "Would you... would you stay with me awhile? Please?"

She felt his arms tighten just a bit. "Sure, I'll stay as long as you like Kurumu-chan."

"Really?"

"Yeah, it's a promise."

The boys and the girls on the way to class all stood there staring at them. *Both* the boys and girls were consumed by envy at what they saw. There was the school beauty, the pink haired Akashiya Moka walking along holding a boy's arm and resting her head lovingly on his shoulder. This was not unusual and the boys were used to seeing this painful sight. Now however the girls were also feeling the ache of jealousy. Because the boy with Moka was no longer the plain looking Aono Tsukune. This boy radiated power and grace with every step he took. Their eyes were drawn to him and unwilling to look away from his masculine beauty.

Tsukune noticed the unusual level of attention. "Everyone is staring."

"Let them Tsukune," Moka said dreamily. "Since you're a vampire now it's only natural."

"I don't think it's a good idea to stay like this though, I'm drawing way too much attention."

This was proved true when they arrived at the school gates to have Kuyou and a handful of his enforcers there waiting for him. The other students kept a safe distance and watched nervously. Tsukune's first instinct was to run but Moka gently whispered to him. "It's all right, there's nothing to be afraid of now."

With a slow nod Tsukune kept walking with Moka at his side. They came to a halt in front of Kuyou who was deliberately blocking their path.

"Go... good morning," Tsukune said.

Kuyou glared coldly. "So,"

"So?"

"So you really are a vampire." Kuyou said in disgust. "Just what sort of game are you playing? You let me believe you might be human all this time and *now* you show the entire school your true form. Why didn't you simply reveal yourself the first time I investigated you?" he deliberately looked at Moka. "Or is it that you couldn't have before now?"

Tsukune and Moka both suddenly looked nervous. "Well, ah, well, you see..." Tsukune began to stammer.

"Never mind," Kuyou replied. "Whatever the truth is it doesn't matter. There is no mistaking you are a vampire *now*. How you became a vampire is not my concern. But I suggest you take on a human disguise. Only the Student Police are permitted to be in their true forms. Don't go around breaking the school rules Aono. I *will* be keeping an eye on you."

With a look he and his people left clearing the way for them to get to class.

"I hadn't thought about that," Tsukune whispered. "How do I get a Rosario to disguise myself?"

Moka smiled mysteriously. "Leave that to me Tsukune."

When Yukari first saw Tsukune in his vampire form she swooned. Mizore looked unhappy. Kurumu just looked in another direction.

"So are you two a couple?!" Yukari asked excitedly. "Does this mean I can come share your bed? Desu!"

Tsukune and Moka both sweat dropped. "Tsukune and I are a couple now." Moka confirmed. She held his hand for an instant before taking the seat next to his. "But Yukari please don't ask about *that* again."

"It's only a matter of time!" The little with said drooling, her fantasies were now one step closer to reality.

"Is this true Tsukune?" Mizore asked. "Have you really chosen?"

"Yeah, I have," he said as gently as he could. "Mizore, Kurumu, I'm sorry if this hurts you, but I love Moka-san and I want to always be with her. I really hope we can still be friends."

Mizore nodded and looked out a window.

"Kurumu?" Tsukune called.

"We'll be friends Tsukune," she said with a false happy demeanor. "You and Moka mean too much to me for me to stop being friends with you. But I hope you realize I won't be burying your face in my chest anymore."

"Ah... okay," he said. *Well at least I don't have to worry about suffocating to death anymore.*

At lunch the small group of friends was heading toward their usual table when Kurumu headed in a different direction.

"May I join you?" She asked

Naruto looked up from his regular spot beneath a tree. "What about your friends?"

"I see them in class and in club; I think they can handle not having me there for lunch. So can I sit with you or not?"

He shrugged. "If you want."

She carefully sat down on the grass beside him. "By the way, do you like cookies?"

Special training

"So do you like them?" She asked with an amused grin.

"Yeah! They're really, really good!" Naruto took another cookie and wolfed it down. She had actually a whole plate full of them and they were sharing as they ate lunch. "You didn't need to go to the trouble, but I'm really glad you did."

"Oh that's all right, I don't mind. I really like baking. But it's been awhile since anyone has gotten to enjoy something I made."

"Really? How come?"

She glanced over to where Tsukune and Moka were sitting with Yukari and laughing. "Well, whenever I'd make them for a certain person they would somehow end up on the ground before he could try them." She recalled the, 'tug of wars' she would get into with Moka whenever she tried to give Tsukune some of her baked goods. She had even ruined a plate of them once bashing in one of Mizore's ice dolls as it was attacking her rival.

"Well that's really too bad," he said as he ate another one. "But I really do appreciate it; this is the first time a girl has ever made anything for me."

"You're kidding!" He shook his head. "You mean you've *never* had a girl cook something for you? What about that girl you were in love with?"

He had a wistful smile. "Sakura was never my girlfriend; the only thing she ever gave me was a beating."

She stared at him; he didn't seem to be joking. "You're kidding right Naruto-kun?"

He shuddered a little. "No."

"Why were you in love with her if all she ever did was beat you?"

With an embarrassed grin he scratched the back of his head. "Heh, you can't help who you fall in love with."

Glancing over to where Tsukune and the others were eating Kurumu let out a wistful sigh. "Well, you've got me there." Turning back to him she laughed. "But since you like them I'll make them for you whenever you want."

"Really?"

"Sure, think of it as making up for all the time you didn't get anything from a girl."

Smiling he had another yummy cookie. *A guy could get used to this.*

"Naruto," a steely voice called as he headed to Police Committee headquarters.

"Yes Kuyou?"

"It's time for that special training session I told you about," with a mysterious smile he held up an old fashioned brass key. "Come with me."

Walking back to the dorms arm in arm Tsukune again noticed the way the other students stared at him and gave him a wide berth. Moka noticed the dreamy looks some of the girls were sending his way. For the first time Tsukune had actually gotten some love notes from girls outside his usual circle. Now that they were officially together the last thing she wanted was new competition.

"This is getting to be a problem," Tsukune said quietly. "Nekonome-sensei told me my vampire form was causing a disruption in class."

"Don't worry Tsukune! I will definitely have a Rosario for you soon."

"Are you sure Moka?"

She nodded fervently. "Don't worry Tsukune; I will take care of it."

Naruto was staring up into the clear blue sky of early afternoon. This was odd as it was already late at night. That didn't really occur to him though as there were two moons clearly visible as well as what looked like a whale peacefully floating past the clouds.

"What the hell is this place?"

"A separate dimension dubbed, 'Monster Paradise' by the Chairman." Kuyou informed him. He had a small vial of reddish brown liquid in his hands. He was carefully pulling out the cork stopper without spilling any of the precious contents.

"And we had to come here for my special training?"

"Oh yes," Kuyou replied. "You see there are two unique qualities to this place you can't find anywhere else in the academy's vicinity. First off because it's a completely separate dimension you are free to cause as much destruction as you please without worrying about harming students or destroying school property. And second, this place is full of monsters."

"So what? The academy is full of monsters."

"Yes, but these are *primal* monsters." Kuyou said. "They are beasts pure and simple, what the monsters of today were before evolving brains capable of rational thought. They are creature of instinct; true monsters. They're not ayashi, they are simple beasts, and so you are free to kill them." Taking the vile he splashed its liquid onto Naruto's clothes creating a large stain. He was very careful not to get any of it on himself.

The liquid left a stain and gave off a ferocious stink. "What the hell is that?" Naruto complained and grabbed hold of his nose.

"Think of it as chum," Kuyou said. "That odor is absolutely irresistible to the creatures of this place. Everything for miles around will come running here wanting to eat you." The youkai kitsune leapt away. "Fight with all the power you have Uzumaki Naruto, or you really will die here."

Even as Kuyou fled the scene Naruto saw things coming out of the woods towards him. A giant black and yellow snake at least forty feet long, a shambling... thing that seemed to be made of earth and leaves with a huge yawning mouth, a hiking creature with four legs like a rhino's and a shark's mouth that took up about half its body. All of these nightmare creatures and more were coming straight for him.

Grimacing Naruto let the red chakra flow out of his body. A single tail took shape. This was no time for holding back. He ran at the four legged land shark. It was powerful and lumbering but not exactly agile. It bit down trying to tear into him but missed completely. With his speed and dexterity he easily leapt onto the top of its snout with a black rasengan in his palm. He slammed it down into the monster's skull right between its two coal black eyes. The creature gave a high pitched cry as the rasengan bored through its flesh and bone into its skull. Its massive body shook and then toppled over lifeless.

Next he ran through some hand sign and opened his mouth pouring out a stream of fire onto the shambling wood pile. It screeched like a thousand rats as it began to burn.

Naruto turned around to see the snake curl up and open wide its jaws. "Déjà vu," he muttered. The snake's head came down swallowing him in one bite. A moment later there was a loud explosion as he tore his way from the inside out.

Ripping free of the last shreds of the snake's flesh Naruto looked around. Dozens more monsters large and small were coming out of the woods. Shaking his head he began to laugh. *Well it's a good*

thing I don't have to hold back. Out of the red chakra a second and third tail took form.

From a hill top a couple miles away Kuyou was watching as Naruto laid waste to all the creatures of this little dimension. He'd already slaughtered more than a hundred beasts and there was no sign he was growing weary. On the contrary he had been drawing on more and more demonic power the longer he fought. Right now his body did not look even slightly human, it was a form made completely of demonic aura and wielding five tails. It would open its mouth and spit out balls of concentrated force that unleashed huge explosions and ripped the whole forest apart wherever they detonated.

From the start he had suspected Naruto possessed far more power than he was letting on, but he'd never imagined he was capable of *this* . It had been to truly test Naruto's abilities that Kuyou had stolen the Chairman's key and brought him here to this special game preserve. The Chairman would be furious upon his return to learn that many of the rare creatures he had placed here had been slaughtered. That would be all right though, it was for a good cause, and he had already framed the captain of the Chairman's personal guard.

You are very impressive Naruto, Kuyou thought. *What I could do with this kind of power under my control.*

Eventually the fighting wound down. Perhaps all the monsters in the area had been killed. Perhaps the chum's delectable scent had been completely masked by smoke and the charred odor of burning meat. Or maybe even these dumb animals had figured out they had best run away.

In any case once it ended Naruto transformed back into his regular self.

He was panting and lying down in the middle of an area that was nothing but blackened rock and debris now. Not too long ago it had been a verdant forest filled with life. At the sound of approaching steps and hands clapping he looked up.

"I... should... kill... you," he said between breaths.

"Why?" Kuyou asked. "Didn't I promise you an extra special training session? Did I not deliver on that promise?"

"I... don't... appreciate... being attacked... by... hundreds of... monsters."

"You seem to have survived without a scratch though, really you are impressive Naruto." Kuyou looked at him intently. "Please tell me, just what are you?"

He slowly got to his feet. "Tired, let's go." He began to walk away.

With a slight grin Kuyou followed him.

Outside the girls' dorm Moka paced back and forth. She was very nervous and worried that it wouldn't come today. She halted and looked excitedly when she spotted a pair of headlights coming down the road. Usually only the school buses traveled on this road, as soon as she was the outline was too small to be a bus she knew this had to be it.

"Thank goodness," she said.

Standing there she watched as the silver limo pulled up and came to a stop. The driver hopped out and hurried to open the passenger seat. The rider stepped out into the pale moonlight.

"Did you bring it?" Moka asked excitedly. "Did you bring the rosario?"

Laughing the figure held out the rosaio to her. It was an exact copy of the one she wore.

"Thank you!" Moka said. But as she reached out to take it the person neatly snatched it away.

"Oh me, oh my is that any way to greet your eldest sister? Aren't you even going to say hello to me first sister dear?" The woman held out her arms.

Embarrassed Moka nodded and stepped forward to hug her. "It's good to see you again Ria neesan."

"And it's good to see you little sister," she replied with a demure smile. "Now then, introduce me to your boyfriend. I am eager to get to know him."

The festival:meeting mom and grandma

" *Annos versa sempre nunca, annos versa sempre nunca, alcar!*"

Ria completed the sealing spell and pressed the Rosario down onto the end of the chain.

Tsukune felt the effects immediately as his strength left him and he collapsed.

"Tsukune!" Moka caught him before he could hit the floor.

As she watched she saw his skin color return to normal as well as his hair and eye color. She also felt the demonic aura common to all vampires fade and disappear. As she held him his eyes closed and his body became limp.

"Tsukune are you all right?" Moka asked worriedly. He now had a leather collar around his neck with a short chain on it just like Moka's. The Rosario at the end of it also looked like an exact copy of hers.

"There's no need to worry Moka dear," Ria said sweetly. "Just like with you having his powers suppressed is an exhausting experience, and since he's been like this for days he'll probably be asleep for the next eight hours or so."

"But he will be all right?" She asked fearfully as she laid him down in his bed.

Ria noted her sister's concern and grinned. "Oh me, oh my you really do care about that boy don't you?" She brought her palms together. "I think I'm jealous."

Moka looked at her older sister nervously. The two of them had never really been close and she knew Ria had a cruel side to her. "Yes, I really love him. And I won't let *anyone* hurt him."

Ria tilted her head a bit and smiled playfully. *Oh but this could be fun!* "Oh sister dear, I hope you don't think *I* would ever hurt the one you love! In the contrary I would do whatever I could to make him happy."

"Thank you, Ria, I would appreciate that."

"Well what is an older sister for?"

"So the seal," Moka asked. "Will it affect his personality the same way mine does?"

Ria shook her head. "No, that was necessary to allow you to actually operate in the human world. Since he's already an adult there was no need to split his personality. Also, your seal was fixed so that you couldn't remove it yourself. Another precaution to protect your human identity while you were among them, as with most vampiric seals he'll be able to remove it on his own."

"Sister, could you... could you alter my seal while you're here?"

Ria lifted a single coal black eyebrow. "I suppose, you've never asked to have your seal altered before."

Moka looked down feeling a bit embarrassed. "Father didn't really approve of me going to live among the humans in the first place or my having such a strange seal. I didn't want to go back to him asking him to undo part of it when I'd had to work so hard to have him create it for me in the first place."

"Oh me, oh my I'm sure if you'd asked he'd have been happy to, after all you are his favorite. The daughter he loves most."

Moka blushed and looked nervous. "That's not so! He doesn't love anyone except himself!"

"You know that's not so Moka," Ria said in a soft voice. "We are passionate creatures after all, and his affection for you has always

been strong."

Moka shook her head. She honestly didn't see it. If he had truly loved her he could never have let her mother leave.

"In any case," Ria continued. "What part of the seal are you wanting to change? Are you wanting to go back to being one persona again?"

"No," the pink haired Moka answered swiftly. "Both sides of me are happy with things as they are." Her inner part was actually happy that she was able to be so honest and open with Tsukune about their shared feelings for him. While her inner side loved him every bit as much as she did it was not something inner Moka found easy to express. She was glad to have outer Moka say those words to him instead. "What I want is to be able to remove my rosario on my own. More than once Tsukune and my other friends have been in danger because I couldn't free my strength to help them. I never want something like that to happen again."

"I see," Ria answered carefully. There was an amused twinkle in her eye as she saw an opportunity to have some fun. "Well I suppose I could alter the seal for you, as a *favor*. But I would want a little favor from you in return."

"What do you have in mind?" Moka had a bad feeling about this.

"Your school's cultural festival is coming up soon isn't it?"

The bad feeling suddenly got a whole lot worse. "That's right."

Ria smiled happily. "How about letting me come visit you during bit and the three of us all get to know each other better?"

Despite her concerns it really wasn't that unreasonable a request for a sister to make.

"All right," Moka agreed. "I'll look forward to it."

"Oh, so will I sister dear, so will I."

"Thank you so much for cooking all this for me!" Naruto told her. It was a Saturday and since they had the day off from school Kurumu had offered to make him a picnic lunch. Right now they were in the middle of a scenic little hill top cemetery with a cloth spread out on the grass in front of a mausoleum.

"You're very welcome Naruto," Kurumu answered with a laugh. "I'm just glad that you like my cooking."

"It's great!" He said enthusiastically. She had made sandwiches, potato salad, fried chicken, potatoes, and had a thermos full of sweet tea to wash it all down with. Best of all a plate of her cookies were waiting to become dessert. The way he was stuffing his face left no doubt as to his opinion of her cooking.

For her part Kurumu really liked seeing a man with a healthy appetite appreciate what she'd made for him. "Like I told you Naruto, I'm always happy to cook for you if you like."

"Thanks Kurumu! You really are the best!"

Still smiling she coughed lightly into her hand. "Uh, say Naruto, I was wondering if I could ask you for a favor."

He stopped eating long enough to give her his full attention. "Sure, what is it Kurumu?"

The blue haired girl looked slightly uncomfortable. "Ah, well you know the cultural festival is coming up soon right?"

"Is it?"

Her jaw dropped and she gaped at him. "How the hell could you not know that? Aren't you working at one of the stalls?"

"Nope, Police Committee members aren't required to."

She grumbled a bit at hearing that. "Well whatever, the fact is its coming up and my mom will be visiting here on the first day."

He smiled. "That's great Kurumu-chan! I never had parents so I think it's wonderful that you'll get to see your mom. The two of you can spend some quality time alone together."

"But that's the problem!" She wailed.

"Huh?"

"Well, you see I've been writing to her while I've been here and I sort of made a teeny tiny little exaggeration." She held out her thumb and forefinger so they were practically touching.

"What sort of exaggeration?"

"Well, you know I'm a succubus right?"

Naruto scratched his chin looking lost in thought. "Uh, I think you may have mentioned that."

She growled at him feeling annoyed. "Stupid! How do you forget something like that?"

"Sorry," he lowered his head.

"Hmmp, **anyway** being a succubus I'm naturally expected to either have a horde of boys chasing me, or one exceptional boy devoted to me. Well I'm really not interested in having a crowd of mindless drones anymore, so I sort of told my mom I have a boyfriend." She looked closely at Naruto. "So you see my problem, right?"

"Uh, no, not really."

"Auugh! I'm starting to see why that girl used to beat you up!"

"Hey!"

"Let me spell this out for you! My mom is coming here expecting to meet my *boyfriend*! Now since I don't have one can you see how that might be a problem?"

The lights suddenly came on and Naruto nodded his head in comprehension. "Oh I understand now."

"Good," she sighed in relief.

"I wish there was something I could do about it to help."

She closed her eyes and groaned. *I wonder if it's too late to talk to Gin?* "Naruto, would you pretend to be my boyfriend for just one day? Just long enough to fool my mom?"

He blinked in surprise and then nodded. "Sure, is that all?"

Now it was her turn to look surprised. "You mean you'll do it?"

He again nodded. "Sure, if I can help a friend I will and this might even be sort of fun." He gave her a huge smile. "Will you shove my face into your breasts like you did with Tsukune?"

Wham!

Naruto found himself with a painful lump forming on top of his head.

"No," Kurumu said and got back to the picnic.

He looked at her warily. *She's starting to remind me a little of Sakura.*

On the first day of the cultural festival a swarm of school buses and private transport arrived bringing in the school alums and family members who made up the crowd that would be attending the festival. Because the school rules were still in effect all the arrivals were required to be in human disguise.

At the very back of one of the buses was a hooded figure in a plain brown monks robe. Without a sound the figure joined the happy crowd moving onto the school campus.

"Goldfish scooping!" Moka called out dressed in a colorful yukata with stars embroidered on the front.

"Can I be your first customer?" Tsukune asked and slid in front of the stall to play the festival game.

"Of... of course you can Tsukune!" She could feel her face begin to blush. Her sister would not be coming until tomorrow. So she had this one day to enjoy the festival with just him. She had always disliked attending festivals because she'd always been forced to do alone. She would always notice the happy couples going around hand in hand and that made her feelings of loneliness even harder to bear. Now though she had a boyfriend. She wanted to spend this festival night with him, walking hand in hand. And at the end of the night she wanted him to make love to her. *Her* not her inner self.

That was what she wanted, but she hadn't found the courage to actually tell him yet. She knew it was way past time to ask and took a deep breath to tell him what she wanted.

"It looks good on you," he said stealing her moment. "The yukata, it makes you look even more beautiful than usual."

Her face was getting even more red. "Oh, tha... thank you."

Tsukune looked at her a bit nervously. "Ah, Moka-chan, when you get done with working, do you think we could go to the festival together? You know, as a couple?"

She could feel her heart trying to burst for joy. "I'd love to Tsukune!" He smiled back at her and all her worries were banished for the rest of the day.

Naruto was hanging out in front of a stand that was serving snow cones waiting patiently. He noticed a stir and spotted the familiar yellow sweater Kurumu always wore. She was leading an older woman with the same aqua colored hair and violet eyes who was dressed in a skimpy sun dress topped with a fur jacket. Impossibly she was even *more* stunning than Kurumu with even larger breasts. She was a flower in full bloom. *Wow! I can see where Kurumu-chan gets her looks!*

Kurumu brought the woman who was so obviously her mother right before where Naruto was.

"Moma! This is him! The boy I told you about in all my letters!" Kurumu said happily.

The woman gave Naruto a dazzling smile. "I'm so pleased to finally meet Kurumu's fiancé!"

Fiancé? He mouthed the word while staring at Kurumu. The girl put her hands together behind her mother's back and mouthed the word, *please* back.

Oh you are so owing me for this! He thought. Putting an embarrassed hand behind his head he gave her a low and formal bow. ""I am very deeply honored to meet you Kurono-san."

"Oh there's no need to be so formal Tsukune!" Kurumu's mother said with a huge smile. "Just call Ageha."

"Ah, I think there's been a little mix up," he said. "My name's not... mmph!"

Kurumu got to his side in a flash slapping her hand over his mouth just in time. "Ah, I always just call him darling," she explained quickly. "Really Tsukune! Asking my mom to call you that! You're just too much!"

Ageha giggled. "That is a little too much, oh I like him!"

With a worried smile Kurumu leaned close to whisper to him. "Please Naruto just for today? Pretend to be Tsukune?"

"No way!" He whispered back.

"I'll cook for you every day for the rest of the semester! Please! Just until she leaves!"

The thought of all that tasty food decided him. "Fine," he agreed.

"Are you two talking naughty?" Ageha teased.

"Heh, you caught us mamma," Kurumu said.

"Ah, yeah, me and Kurumu-chan do that all the time," Naruto said feeling a little uncomfortable.

Looking very amused Ageha unexpectedly grabbed him and put him in a head lock shoving his head into her chest. Naruto was stunned at the softness of her breasts. She leaned in to whisper to him herself.

"Tsukune, my daughter, she's actually quite innocent. I'm guessing that she still doesn't have any experience. That's not good. As her mother I'm giving you permission to take her forcefully."

Naruto suddenly felt blood leaking from his nose. "Fo... forcefully?"

Seeing his reaction she laughed, he was adorable! She released her headlock and instead took hold of one of his hands. "Tonight, how about the three of us have dinner together? Afterwards," she took his hands and placed it firmly on one of her breasts. "The way of love between a man and a woman. I'll use my body to teach you."

Blood gushed from his nose and he collapsed.

"Mom! What are you doing?!" Kurumu cried in horror and helped him back to his feet.

"I was just teasing him a little," Ageha said. As Kurumu helped him wipe off the blood and clean himself off her mom looked a bit more closely. "You know dear it's funny, I could have sworn you said Tsukune had dark hair, and I don't remember you ever mentioning those cute whisker marks."

"Ah, well, you see..." Kurumu stalled trying to think up a plausible excuse.

"Uzumaki Naruto!" A voice boomed out.

Naruto jumped around and instinctively pulled out a kunai. Fifteen feet behind him was a figure in a brown robe with a hood pulled up hiding the face. "Who are you?" he demanded.

The figure's head shook. "Geez brat, I come all this way just to see you and you can't even recognize my voice? I swear Naruto I'm not sure I should have bothered." The hood was lowered revealing an attractive woman with long blonde hair tied up in two tails.

"Baachan!!" He yelled out. He raced to her and embraced her like she really was his grandmother.

"Damn it brat I cross dimensions and risk my life and my position just to see you and you *still* call me that?" Despite her words she sounded pleased and was returning his hug warmly.

Both Kurumu and her mom were looking on the scene perplexed.

Ageha turned to her daughter. "Is that really Tsukune's grandmother? And why is she calling him 'Naruto?'"

"I... I don't know," Kurumu answered honestly. *I thought he said he was an orphan, how can he have a grandmother?*

Ageha frowned slightly. "Kurumu dear, as his fiancé you should know more about his family."

"Fiancé?!" Tsunade's head snapped up and she sent Naruto a questioning look. "Naruto! Don't tell me you've actually found someone you want to marry after just a few months?! I don't object to you finding someone, but isn't this a little fast? Have you really gotten over Sakura?"

"Why do you keep calling Tsukune, Naruto?" Ageha asked. The other woman's robe was now open and she noticed her breasts were almost as large as her own.

Tsunade appeared confused. "What are you talking about? Who's Tsukune? This is Uzumaki Naruto, an annoying but very special person to me." She now turned her full attention back to him. "Naruto just what is going on here? Is this girl really you fiancé? If you lie to me be prepared for the consequence." She cracked her knuckles.

Paling he cautiously took a step back. "Well, technically, no I guess not."

"What?!" Ageha shouted and fixed her daughter with a glare as her wings and claws came out. "Kuroko Sagawa Kurumu! Explain what is going on here right now!"

"Brat," Tsunade growled. "What are you playing at? Explain yourself!"

Naruto and Kurumu looked at each other. " **It's complicated...**"
They both said at once

The festival:hearing opinions

The two of them were cornered. They were both seated at a little table with the two women towering over them. Ageha no longer had her claws or wings exposed but still looked ready to bite someone. For her part Tsunade had her arms crossed and a couple veins near bursting.

"So let me see if I have this right," Ageha began in a dangerously understanding tone. "You never actually had a boyfriend, never mind a fiancé, and the boy you were interested in has already fallen in love with someone else?"

Shaking in terror Kurumu could only nod. Without really thinking about it she grabbed onto to Naruto's arm for support. He immediately put his other arm around her.

"What the hell were you doing lying to me brat? I'm still your Hokage remember? I come all the way out here and you let me think you've got a fiancé!" Unable to hold back she whacked him on the top of the head.

"Ow!" Naruto winced. Knowing what kind of monster strength she had that wasn't *too* bad. "I'm sorry baa..." He saw her get ready to bop him again. "I mean Hokage-sama! I'm sorry, but I had no idea you were coming to visit! I was just trying to help Kurumu-chan."

Kurumu looked over at Tsunade. "Please don't be angry with Naruto-kun! He only lied to you because he was doing me a favor. It's only because I forced him into it!"

"Kurumu you know that's not true! You didn't force me to do anything I didn't want to!" Naruto looked over at Ageha. "Please don't be angry with Kurumu! I know she technically told you a lie, but it was only because she didn't want to disappoint you. If you want to punish someone please punish me!"

"No," Kurumu called out. "Naruto's totally blameless in this! Punish me!"

"No! Punish me!" Naruto insisted.

The two older women softened their stances just a bit and then looked at one another.

Ageha suddenly began to laugh softly. "Isn't young love sweet?"

Tsunade's anger slipped as memories of her own feelings for a certain boy flooded back to her. "Yes... yes it is, it can be painful sometimes, but also very tender and sweet."

Ageha nodded.

Naruto and Kurumu were both surprised by the sudden change in mood. "Uh, what are you two talking about?" Naruto asked. "We're not in love we were pretending about that."

The two women shared a knowing look and grinned.

"Why don't the four of us have dinner tonight?" Ageha suggested.

"I was just going to suggest the same thing," Tsunade agreed. "How about we meet back here at 6?"

Ageha smiled. "Sounds good," she glanced at her daughter who was still holding onto Naruto. "Let's go Kurumu, I want you to show me around your school and tell me everything that's happened this year."

"You're not going to punish me are you?" Kurumu said nervously.

"No," he replied. "Now come on."

"You too Naruto," Tsunade told him. "I want to see this place that Jiraiya found for you and here about what it's been like. I also have things to tell you."

Naruto and Kurumu let go of each other and left, each with their own issue to deal with.

As soon as they were a safe distance Ageha looked at her daughter with a knowing smirk. "You have my permission to marry him."

"What?!" Kurumu choked out.

Ageha laughed at her daughter's reaction. "I don't mean you have to do it right away, I just thought I'd get it out of the way. I want you to know I approve of him."

"Mom what are you talking about? I only like Naruto as a friend! He's not my destined one!"

"Are you sure about that dear?"

"Of course I am! Tsukune's my destined one!" She shouted drawing stares from onlookers.

"He's the boy who has fallen in love with your best friend?" Ageha questioned. "If you really believe that dear why did you ask Naruto to meet me instead of him?"

"What?"

Ageha looked at her daughter. "When you needed someone why was it Naruto you turned to instead of Tsukune?"

"Because... well because he was available. I knew he'd help me and I didn't think Tsukune would." She admitted hanging her head low. For a succubus having to admit there was any male she couldn't get was humiliating. Having to admit it to her own mother was even more so. "He's with Moka now so I knew there was no way he would agree to pretend to be my fiancé."

"Did you even try to convince him?"

"No," Kurumu said sharply. "I want him and Moka both to be happy. As long as there was a chance I fought for him. But now that he's chosen I want to respect that."

Ageha shook her head lightly. "That's not how I raised you to think. For succubi there is no such thing as admitting defeat when it comes to a destined one. If you cannot be a wife than a mistress will do so long as can share his bed from time to time."

She saw her daughter's face blush.

She really is much too innocent. "What matters is that if you really thought he was your destined one you wouldn't just give up even if he *has* chosen. There's more than one way to get into a man's bed!"

"Mooooom!" She was feeling embarrassed.

"What? You know it's true. But that's not really the point I'm trying to make. The point is that when you needed someone it wasn't Tsukune you turned to but Naruto. Not only did you turn to him for help but when you were caught you tried to protect him. Is there any other boy you would have done that for?"

"Tsukune!" She answered immediately.

"Anyone else?"

Kurumu stopped to think about it. The only other boy she could think of was that lecherous Gin. "No," she said firmly.

"Well what does that tell you?" Ageha asked.

"That Naruto is a really good friend to me."

Ageha sighed. "Fine then he's just a friend," she looked away and spoke in a teasing voice. "Hmmm, since you're not interested maybe I should still take him to bed and show him a few things about how to please a woman. You'll thank me later."

"MOM!" Kurumu shouted.

They were sitting down at a stall that was serving instant ramen in plastic bowls. Tsunade had looked in vain for a place that was selling sake or beer. No such luck.

Naruto looked a bit regretfully as he dug in. "Thanks for treating me baachan, but it's not like Ichiraku's," he said wistfully.

"Every place has its own unique charms Naruto," she told him as she picked at hers without any enthusiasm. "For instance that Kurumu girl was rather interesting. I take it she's a monster like her mother?"

Naruto nodded. "Yeah, she's a succubus."

"So she has wings and claws too?"

Naruto blinked. "I guess, I haven't really thought about it."

"Well it shouldn't be too big a problem in a world with filled with blood lines and mutations. She can just call it a kekkei genkai and no one will think twice about it." *A certain little Hyuuga girl will be very sad though. Oh well, if she was serious she should have made a move when she could have.*

"What are you talking about?"

Oblivious as ever, she thought. "Nothing, it's nothing you need to worry about right now. It will likely still be years before you can return."

"Who are you trying to kid?" He asked bitterly. "I'm never going back."

With a flick of her index finger she sent him flying off his stool to crash into the road.

"Hey! What was that for?!" He pulled himself back up and dusted himself off before returning to his seat.

"I don't want to hear any more self pity out of you Naruto!" She told him sharply. "Yes, you've had a hard life and did not deserve any of what happened to you. But I thought you were the one who never ever gave up. And if you really believe that why are you wearing this?"

She reached over and pulled out the Shodai's necklace.

He grinned at her. "Since you went to the trouble of giving it back to me I decided to wear it even if it is cursed. It reminds me of you and of home."

Feeling touched she turned back to her food. "Damn it brat, how do you manage to say such sweet things?" She reached into a pouch she was wearing and pulled out three letters. "Here, these are for you. Obviously I couldn't announce I was coming here but I allowed Jiraiya, Kakashi, and Iruka the chance to write to you."

She saw his whole face light up as he took the letters and shuffled them around. She was not surprised to see that it was Iruka's he wanted to read first.

"Don't read those now, save them for later. There are important things I need to tell you."

"Like what?" he asked with a slight pout as he put the letters carefully away. He really wanted to read them now.

"Like the situation back home. To start with people have calmed down and international tension has eased since your departure, but Earth, Lightning, and Mist have all declared that they will go to war with us if you should ever return."

"Great," Naruto muttered.

"On the bright side we've signed a new alliance with Sand and Gaara is absolutely adamant that he will come to our defense if we are attacked."

"So if I come back it'll cause a brand new Great Ninja War?"

"Pretty much," Tsunade admitted quietly. "That's one reason why you'll need to wait a few years before you can come back. I'll need that much time to make the other Kages accept you."

He looked at her sharply. "You said, 'one reason,' are there others?"

"You know it's really annoying sometimes how you can be so clueless in some areas and so perceptive in others."

"When am I ever clueless?" He said defensively.

She sighed. "Never mind, it would take too long to list," she muttered. "You're right there are other problems that I'll have to deal with before you can be recalled. Danzo has grown much stronger and gained a lot of support among the clans and is even rumored to be in secret communication with the Fire Daimyo. He's all in favor of bringing you home even at the risk of war. He wants you to be placed in his section of the ANBU, known as Root, and properly 'reeducated.' He wants to turn you into a living weapon."

Naruto shuddered at the thought. He had come to sort of like Sai, but he didn't want to just become a mindless tool as he had been.

"But the biggest problem is still Akatsuki. They've managed to capture all the tailed beasts except for you and the eight tails. And we still know next to nothing about them. If you were to come back you would immediately be targeted by them. They'll have to be dealt with first."

"I'd like to deal with them," he said angrily. "I owe them, not just for myself but for Gaara too."

"Don't even think it brat!" She said sharply. "They've taken down seven jinchuuriki and are not to be taken lightly. Leave it to Jiraiya and me, we'll deal with them." She placed a hand lightly on his shoulder. "Have a little faith in me and the pervert, we are Sannin after all. Even if it takes years we **will** bring you back some day."

He smiled at her. "Yeah, I'm sure you will," he said quietly.

"Now, do you have something for me?"

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Didn't Jiraiya tell you that along with attending this school you were to keep a record of all major events that occurred to you? I'm looking forward to reading your report."

"Report?" He said weakly. Did ero-sennin ever say anything about writing a report?

She frowned at him. "You haven't even started it have you?"

"Well..."

She cracked her knuckles. "Make some shadow clones and get to work! It had better be done by the time I'm ready to leave tonight."

He created a hundred shadow clones and sent them flying to get paper and pen.

"So you're not *really* his grandmother?" Kurumu asked.

Tsunade shook her head in annoyance. "No, I'm just his Hokage?"

She looked confused. "You're his, 'fire shadow?'"

"It's a title," Naruto explained. "Baachan is really the leader of my village."

"Brat, you are seriously putting your life in danger calling me that!" She growled. Though they were having dinner in the school cafeteria it was pretty good. She stood up. "Anyway I need to go the ladies room."

"I'll come with you," Kurumu jumped up as well.

As soon as they were gone Naruto felt Ageha grab his face and bury it into the warmest, softest place imaginable. Though he couldn't breathe he was happy.

"Naruto-kun," Ageha purred in his ear. "How about after the festival you and me go back to your room? I'll show you how to make my little girl cry out your name and beg to have your children."

In the bathroom Tsunade and Kurumu were washing their hands.

"You know I was hoping to learn a lot about Naruto since you arrived," Kurumu told her. "But I haven't actually learned a single thing."

"I'm sorry, but believe me when I say that's for the best," Tsunade told her.

"He... he has a lot of secrets doesn't he?"

Tsunade nodded. "More than you could ever imagine."

"He told me about how the girl he loved was killed by his best friend and how he killed him to avenge her."

Tsunade looked at her in surprise. "He told you that?"

Kurumu nodded.

"What else has he told you?"

"Nothing," she said unhappily.

"Well, this may be little comfort, but his telling you even that must have been hard for him." Tsunade looked closely at her. "He must trust you a great deal."

"It doesn't feel that way, not when he hides everything."

Tsunade leaned close to her and spoke in a hushed tone. "A ninja's life is filled with secrets, that is a simple fact. Try to be patient, accept what he tells you and don't resent him for what he has to keep hidden. And when he does tell you things that seem impossible... believe them. Naruto is the sort of person who can make the impossible happen with frightening regularity."

"Somehow I believe that," Kurumu said.

When they returned to their table they found Naruto sprawled out on the floor with a small pool of blood leaking out of his nose. Though he was unconscious there was a massive smile plastered on his face. Tsunade immediately bent over him and began applying medical jutsus while Kurumu glared at her mother.

"You tried to seduce him didn't you mom?"

"Maybe," Ageha said with an innocent smile.

At the end of the festival the two of them saw off their visitors. Kurumu escorted her mom to the Jag she had driven here, making very sure she didn't get a chance to speak to Naruto alone again.

Meanwhile Naruto escorted Tsunade to one of the parked buses that were getting ready to leave. Tsunade had her monk's robe back on with the hood up. In her hand was about a thousand page report hastily written by hand and put in a binder.

"Thanks for visiting me baachan," he told her. "It... it was really good to see you again."

"I was happy to see you too Naruto, I'm glad you've adjusted." She hugged him fiercely with her one free arm and he hugged her back with both.

"When will I see you again?" He asked plaintively.

"Who knows? It may be months or years. I can't take the chance of visiting too often or your enemies may take note of it." She kindly put a hand on his face. "But even if it has to be a long time, don't you ever doubt there are people out there who care about you and are trying to bring you home."

He nodded. "I know."

Hidden in the shadows of her hood she smiled. "I like that Kurumu girl, and I can see that she likes you too. I hope the two of you are happy together."

Naruto's face began to turn red. "Wha... what do you mean?"

"I mean exactly what I said; I hope the two of you will be happy together. Goodbye now." She gave him a final quick hug. "Take care of yourself brat."

"Bye baachan, please stay safe until I can see you again."

He stood there and watched her enter the crowded bus.

He waved to her and saw her wave back as it pulled away.

He would never see her again.

The festival: Kyouko's visit

As she slowly woke the first thing she noticed was his scent. For a vampire the sense of smell was almost as important as that of sight or sound. She breathed it in, *his* scent. The delicious sticky sweet aroma that always made her heart beat a little faster and caused her to start to drool. (Not exactly romantic but that was what it always did to her.)

Next she opened her eyes. She was in her dorm room lying on her bed with her head resting comfortably on his chest. Tsukune was still asleep and his beautiful face was serene and at peace. She was naked except for the collar around her throat. He was as well except for the rosario that was chained to his right wrist. That meant it was his human face she was looking at. Truthfully she thought his vampiric face more handsome and sexier. But she loved this Tsukune as well. This was the face of the first boy she had ever fallen in love with. The boy she'd originally run into with her bike. The first boy she'd ever sucked blood from. The first boy who'd ever put himself in danger just for her. The first boy to ever truly *matter* to her. It was the sweet kind face of the first and only one she'd ever love.

She could feel the warmth of his body resting against hers. With her fingertips she traced her hand across the smooth skin of his chest. He had a few minor scars and she lovingly ran her fingers over them as well. They were proof of the battles they had fought together, and of his willingness to always protect her.

She could hear the rhythm of his heart beating, as well as the slow steady sound of his breathing. They were both comforting sounds that set her mind at ease.

Last night had been their first time. Tsukune had made love to her other self before, but for the pink haired Moka last night had been the first. Once she'd finished her duties at the stall they had spent the rest of the evening together. For the first time she'd gotten to

attend a festival as part of a couple. They'd walked along hand in hand, had cotton candy, played the different games, and enjoyed a late dinner together.

Then they'd returned here, to her room.

They began kissing and sharing some light caresses. Things had moved on from there quickly as she'd taken off her yukata to reveal she had nothing else on. He'd carried her to the bed as he feverishly got rid of his clothes. The memory of his body inside of hers, of her cries and exhortations, of the shaking all consuming *pleasure* he'd given her had only made her want even more.

This is how it should always be, she thought. I want to wake up with you every day from now on. I never want to be parted from you again. If anything could have made her even more certain he was the one for her last night had been it. She could not imagine doing any of it with anyone but him. He was the only one she would ever accept as a mate. (Or as a husband as the humans thought of it.)

Now only one thing would make this moment absolutely perfect.

Chomp!

"Ow!" Tsukune woke with a start. "Moka! Hey!"

"Sorry Tsukune, I couldn't resist," she mumbled without pulling out her fangs.

Of all the sense taste was *definitely* her favorite.

About an hour later the two of them headed out together. She had already worked her shift for the festival and Tsukune was scheduled to work his tomorrow. They would get to spend the whole day together, though not alone.

"I hope you don't mind Tsukune, I told Yukari we would meet with her this morning and that we would meet Ria for lunch." The two of them were dressed in their school uniforms and she was holding his arm as she walked close to him. "I also promised Kurumu we would drop by."

Tsukune smiled and nodded. "No problem Moka-chan, it'll be fun hanging out with everyone, and I really want to thank your sister for helping me with the rosario."

"Right," Moka said a little nervously. It had been a long time since she had lived with her older sister and not all the memories she had were good ones. She just hoped Ria was a bit kinder than she had been.

Aono Kyouko stepped off the bus along with a great many others. Most of the people she'd ridden with looked quite a bit older and from listening to what they had to say they all seemed to be alumni of the school.

She peered about at the crowds that were streaming towards the gothic looking building at the top of the cliff. Her bus was far from the only one arriving and everyone was heading in the same direction. No matter how strange the appearance that building had to be Youkai Academy.

"Suspicious!" Kyouko announced loudly and set off with the others.

Despite the odd snatches of conversations that drifted to her ear, (Border races? Coexistence?) the stalls that surrounded the main building didn't look too different from what her own school had during its cultural festival. The students and visitors seemed to be friendly and on the surface everything was normal enough.

But that was only on the surface. Her eyes darted this way and that looking for her cousin's face. Something was definitely weird and she

would find out what! "Where are you Tsuki? Where are you Tsukune?"

"Pardon me; are you by any chance looking for Aono Tsukune?"

Kyouko looked over her shoulder to see a beautiful dark haired woman in her early twenties smiling at her. She was quite lovely with pale skin and coal black hair that went down past her shoulders. She had a black choker around her neck with a silver chain holding a cross with a blue center piece. She was wearing a black dress that covered her completely from her neck down to her ankles. She even had on black leather gloves so that her face was the only part of her body exposed.

Yet her dress wasn't exactly modest, it looked to be two sizes too small. It hugged her tight, showing her every curve and emphasizing her extremely large breasts. It revealed nothing, but hinted at everything.

Kyouko blinked at the odd woman, not sure what to make of her. "Are you some kind of goth?"

The woman tilted her head a bit, questioningly. "A goth?"

Kyouko nodded. She had never met any of them but she'd heard about them. "You know, those people who like to pretend their vampires? The way you're dressed reminds me of that."

For some reason the woman found that quite amusing. "You're asking me if I am a human pretending to be a vampire?"

"Yeah, that's right."

The woman laughed softly. "Oh me, oh my just the opposite."

"What do you mean?" Kyouko asked not getting it.

"I am a vampire pretending to be a human," she told her. "Like all the other monsters who are here."

Kyouko made a face and rolled her eyes. "I don't know what kind of joke that is but please don't treat me like a little kid. Everyone knows that monsters are just stories. Only children believe in them."

The other woman's lips turned up and a single raven black eyebrow quirked upwards. "Is that a fact my sweet?" She took a couple steps closer, her brown eyes looking intently into Kyouko's.

Kyouko was getting a strange vibe and took a step back away from her. "You said you knew my cousin Tsukune. Do you know where he is?"

"I do know him," the woman confirmed. "I am in fact going to be meeting with him. Would you care to walk with me?"

"Yes, I'd appreciate that," Kyouko said. Since she was taking her help she extended a hand. "I'm Aono Kyouko by the way, Tsuki is my younger cousin."

The other woman placed a gloved hand into hers and was careful to give the gentlest of pressure as she shook it. "I am Sekitan Ria my sweet Kyouko." Taking her by the hand she led her towards the main entrance of the building. "Come along with me."

Kyouko clutched the package she had and silently followed along.
This is really suspicious!

There were stalls set up in the main hall inside the school building. Also a few of the rooms were being used as cafés and to stage scary 'Human houses.' Ria led Kyouko past all of them down a side hall that looked to be empty.

She took her to room 103 and opened the door waving her inside. "In here," Ria said with a mischievous grin.

Kyouko went inside. "Tsuki! It's me Kyouko! How have you... Tsuki?" looking about she didn't see her cousin. It was just an empty

classroom.

Click.

Kyouko turned to see Ria locking the door and placing herself between her and it. "What are you doing? You said you would take me to my cousin."

"Hmmm," Ria tapped her lips thoughtfully. "Actually I didn't. I *said* I was going to meet Tsukune, which I still am. I *asked* if you would like to walk with me. I never actually said I was taking you to meet Tsukune." Grinning the woman slowly began moving towards her.

Kyouko had always prided herself on being fearless. Sure, she occasionally made some decisions that might have been a little off, but she was never afraid to do something. So when a stranger had approached her with an offer to get her into her cousin's school if she would just deliver a package she had agreed without hesitation. She'd wanted to come here to check up on Tsukune and make sure he was safe. It had never occurred to her that she might be in danger.

She didn't understand what was going on but she instinctively backed away from the woman as she looked about desperately for some escape route.

Ria could taste her fear mingling with her already tempting scent. Her mouth was watering. "Let me show you something amazing my sweet." She said as she pulled her rosario off.

A few cries came from room 103, but no one heard them.

When Naruto arrived at the maid café where Kurumu was working the succubus spotted him and immediately sat him down at a table. She was dressed in a really frilly looking little black and white outfit that was oddly... enticing.

"How do you like my outfit master?" She said with a teasing grin as she deliberately bent over to give him an unobstructed view of her boobs.

He felt himself going red as he was unable to look away from what she was showing him. "You... you look really great Kurumu-chan, that outfit really suits you."

She could see where his eyes were focusing as well as how his face was reacting. She liked having his full attention and giggled. Without thinking about it her tail appeared and began to excitedly wag back and forth on its own.

Naruto noticed it and was immediately reminded of the wings and claws Ageha had displayed yesterday. *She really is a succubus*, he thought. *She isn't human, but then I'm not either am I?* That thought did not bother him as he expected it to. Whatever Kurumu was he liked her.

The girl straightened up a bit and placed her hands in front of herself. "So what would you like master? Coffee, tea," her voice dropped a bit and she winked. "Or me?"

He began to choke which made her laugh.

He finally told her he wanted tea and some cookies.

When she brought them over he looked at her nervously. A lot of the other males in the room, many of them adult men who were alumni, were eying her up and down. "Hey Kurumu, would you uh, like to maybe... uhm... if you don't mind, we could... ah..."

Seeing him struggle Kurumu decided to take pity on him. "Are you wanting to ask me to go to the festival with you when I get done with my shift? Half the guys who have come in here have asked me that."

Suddenly deflated he lowered his head. "Oh, uh, yeah I was." *Idiot!* He berated himself. *Of course other guys would ask her that!*

Yesterday was just a favor! It's not like she'd want to do something like that with me!

He felt her hand touch his chin and lift his face back up to see her leaning towards him again grinning playfully. "I'd love to go with you Naruto-kun; I get off in about three hours."

"Seriously?" He gasped.

The senior who was acting as the café manager barked at her to take care of another table. Before she went Kurumu gave him a wink and a nod. "Yes, seriously Naruto-kun."

Ria met Tsukune, Moka and Yukari down in the cafeteria for lunch at noon just as they'd agreed.

"Oh me, oh my," she told them. "I hope you don't mind if I don't get anything to eat, I'm already full."

After a few hours wandering the festival together Ria gave her sister and Tsukune a pair of warm hugs goodbye.

"Little sister, you really must bring him home with you some time," Ria insisted. "I know everyone will just adore him."

"Ah maybe next summer," Moka said warily. With winter break approaching she would have plenty of time to work on that.

"Well I definitely want to see him and you again, goodbye little sister. Goodbye Tsukune."

They waved as she walked off and headed to where a parked limousine awaited her.

Moka let out a huge sigh of relief. "Oh thank goodness that went much better than I'd hoped."

Tsukune looked at her questioningly. "Why were you so worried? She seems really, really nice."

Moka slowly nodded. She had too. She had asked a great many questions about Tsukune, but nothing too intrusive and her behavior had been very proper the whole while. "Maybe she has changed," Moka said hopefully.

Her driver got out to open the back door for her. She slipped into the limo and leaned back feeling relaxed and satisfied. "Home Groook," she commanded.

"Yes Mistress," the disguised goblin obeyed and they were soon in motion.

With a smile Ria picked up the package. To think a human had been in possession of the Lilith Mirror! She was already thinking of just what sort of fun she could have with it.

She set the mirror down placed a gentle hand on the girl sleeping in the back seat beside her. Her blood was delicious and Ria had taken a little too much, she was never one to deny herself pleasure. But the girl would be just fine with a couple days rest.

Ria touched her wounded neck affectionately. "You'll make a wonderful addition to the family slaves my sweet," she cooed softly. "I think you're going to like it in Castle Akashiya."

The festival: Destined One

"Yahoo!" Kurumu shouted as Naruto once *again* tossed a plastic ring around a tiny wooden post.

Naruto grinned at her. He really liked how she didn't have a problem showing her feelings and admitting she was excited about something. Many of the girls he'd grown up had seemed to almost make a game of confusing him. He could never guess what any of them thought or felt at a given moment. *Well, they were almost all kunoichi after all.* "Which one do you want this time?"

"That one!" She pointed at what looked like a rabbit with bat wings and fangs. He had no idea if it was just someone's imagination or if it represented a real monster.

An exasperated student working the stall got the stuffed toy down and handed it to her. She grabbed it and hugged it affectionately. She already had five other stuffed toys that Naruto had won for her. He then looked at Naruto. The games had deliberately been set up to be very difficult to win. No one was supposed to just walk up and win six times running. "How are you so good at this?" He asked indignantly.

Naruto simply grinned and rubbed the back of his head. "I'm a ninja."

"So? What does that mean?" The attendant scowled.

"It means I can hit a bull's-eye two inches wide with a kunai from fifty yards away while running flat out. So tossing a ring onto a stick ten feet away isn't much of a challenge."

"Yahoo!" She grabbed onto his arm. "Naruto-kun's the best!"

Naruto blushed a bit; he wasn't used to having a pretty girl praise him like this. Sakura never really had. The last time a girl had was

probably Hinata just before he faced her cousin at the finals of the Chunin exams. And then she had just been cheering him on a friend.

Is that what Kurumu is doing now? He wondered. She was still in the maid outfit she'd worn while serving in the cafe. They were together enjoying the cultural festival as... friends. But the way she was hugging him, the way they'd walked together arm in arm, it had felt as maybe something other than just friends. Could it even be...

"So what do you say?" The attendant asked in an exasperated tone.

"Huh? What? Sorry," Naruto gave him a sheepish grin. "I wasn't listening."

The guy sighed. "I was asking if you would *please* go to another stall, you're wiping me out here."

Naruto doubted that. He still had lots of stuffed toys left. He wondered if the attendant would have said that if he'd been wearing his black Police Uniform. Probably not, the students didn't want to say *anything* to anyone in the Student Police Committee. Of course that was why he'd decided to put on some of his regular clothes.

He looked at the cute girl who was hugging him and decided to leave it up to her. "Do you want me to win you some more prizes or do you want to go to another stall?"

She tapped her lips as though seriously pondering it. "Yahoo!! More prizes please!" She began jumping up and down and her tail was out wagging behind her."

Naruto produced a hundred yen. "Another set of rings please."

The attendant groaned as he accepted the money and provided three more rings.

"Thank you for winning me so many cute toys Naruto-kun!" Kurumu said happily.

"Heh, no problem Kurumu-chan." He had actually won her fifteen and had only stopped when the attendant started crying. Not surprisingly even though they were for her he would up carrying them. That was okay though, she was happy and that was more than enough to make him happy too.

They were walking arm in arm again. He would never have tried to walk with her like this. She was the one who had simply grabbed his arm and started walking this way. Was this how she walked with friends? He couldn't recall ever seeing her do this with anyone else.

"Hey Naruto-kun, I'm really glad you asked me to go to the festival with you."

"Oh, well thank you for going with me," he said. He paused for a bit and then asked what had been on his mind most of the night. "Why did you?"

"Hmmm? What do you mean?" She looked up at him questioningly.

"Well, you had lots of other guys offer to take you but you turned all of them down. Why did you say yes to me?"

"I said yes to you because when I really needed you yesterday you were there for me." She said. She sounded surprised. "Even though I know you didn't want to you agreed to pretend to be my boyfriend. And then when we got caught you tried to protect me. Honestly, how could any girl *not* go out with a boy who did all that for her?"

"Oh, so this is your way of thanking me," he nodded. "Got it."

With an annoyed grunt she jabbed an elbow in his ribs.

"Ow!"

"Dummy!" She barked. "I didn't mean it like that! This isn't a thank you! I came here with you because I *like you*. There, is that plain enough?"

He blushed a little more. "You... you like me?"

Looking up into his clear blue eyes Kurumu could feel her own face getting hot and quickly looked away. She did make sure to tighten his hold on his arm just a little more. "Dummy, is it really that surprising? I don't make cookies and have lunch with just anyone you know."

He slowly nodded. It felt really good to her someone tell him they liked him. He hadn't heard it much growing up. Even now the number of people he really cared about remained small. "I like you too Kurumu-chan." He told her quietly.

She glanced at him. *How does he mean that?* She wondered.

They were content not to ask any more questions and just walked together arm in arm.

As it started to get later the crowds began to thin out. Naruto noticed that most of the people who were still here now were couples. Either students or older alumni who were enjoying the peaceful atmosphere together. Some of them just walked close while others held hands and some walked arm in arm.

I bet anyone looking at us would think we're a couple, Naruto suddenly thought.

"I like that Kurumu girl, and I can see that she likes you too. I hope the two of you are happy together."

Baachan had said that just before getting on the bus to leave. Had she noticed something that he hadn't? The old woman was loud and violent but she was really smart about everything except gambling.

"Oh," Kurumu suddenly said.

"Hmm? What?" He looked in the same direction she was looking at.

He spotted Tsukune and Moka slowly walking together hand in hand. They looked as though they had eyes only for each other and didn't notice either of them. Naruto looked at her. She was staring at them but didn't seem upset or on the verge of tears.

"You all right Kurumu-chan?"

She nodded and finally looked away from them. "Yes, I'm fine," she answered. "It doesn't bother me anymore. I'm a little surprised, but it doesn't." *Wouldn't it still hurt more if Tsukune really was my destined one?* She wondered.

"... when you needed someone it wasn't Tsukune you turned to but Naruto. Not only did you turn to him for help but when you were caught you tried to protect him. Is there any other boy you would have done that for?"

Her mother's words came back to her. Naruto was the one who was there for her and protected her when she really needed someone.

"Are you sure you're okay?" He asked in a concerned voice.

Just knowing that he was worried about her made her happy. "I'm fine, she promised."

He nodded. "It's getting sort of late, why don't I walk you back to your room?"

"Okay."

He waited just outside her door as she brought in all the booty he had won for her. She came back out again to say good night.

"Thanks for taking me tonight; I really had a good time." She told him.

"Me too," he said sounding a touch sad.

"Is something wrong?"

He looked at her and spoke slowly and carefully. "Even if you're still in love with Tsukune it'll be all right you know. Even if it hurts it'll get better with time." He looked away from her. "I know it's really hard for a girl to lose the one she loves."

"Wow, you really are a dummy, huh?" She said exasperated.

"Naruto, look at me for a second okay?"

"Sure," he turned his eyes to her.

"Who am I?"

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Who am I?" She repeated. "Come on it's not *that* hard a question is it?"

"You're Kurumu," he said.

"Bingo! Right! I am Kurumu, **not** Sakura. Got it? I am not Sakura, and Tsukune is not Sasuke. I'm not heartbroken Naruto. I admit I was really hurt, but I think I've realized something."

"What?" Naruto asked curiously.

Kurumu took a deep breath. "Tsukune... is not my destined one," saying those words felt at once liberating and terrifying all at one go. "I thought he was, I really did, but now I know that he's just not. I'll still love him... but as a friend, just as I love Moka and Yukari and Mizore."

Naruto was staring into those beautiful violet eyes and was feeling more afraid than he had for a long time outside of actual combat. "Then... who is your destined one?"

A playful grin appeared. She got up on her toes and gave him a quick kiss on his cheek. "Who knows? Good night!"

Before he could react she slipped back into her room and shut the door.

Naruto went home that night confused, but happy.

The next morning Naruto again had some casual clothes on as he got ready to enjoy the last day of the festival. Kurumu had already agreed to meet him at 11 so they could go visit the stands where Tsukune and Yukari would be working.

As he was leaving he nearly tripped over a small package that had been left outside his door. He saw it was addressed to him but there was no return address. Not being a total idiot he performed a basic jutsu to confirm there was no explosive within the package before he opened it.

"A mirror?" He said to himself. "Who would send me a mirror?"

The worst possible outcome

As the limo returned her to castle Akashiya with her new slave Ria thought again about her good luck.

Flashback

Ria entered her father's study to inform him of an important matter concerning their family business. As she entered he was reading a letter.

"Troubling," the elder vampire muttered.

"Is something wrong Lord Akashiya?" Though he was her father she always addressed him as such.

Nodding to her as he waved the letter about in his hand. "My fellow Hades Lord informs me one of the nine Demon Lords will be arriving at Youkai soon."

One of her coal black eyebrows jumped. "A Demon Lord? A ruler of one of the Hell dimensions?" Demons were *not* considered true monsters. Monsters were creatures born on and belonging to the earth. Demons were not native to the earth at all, but came from other dimensions. They could be weak or strong, but their rulers, their Lords, had awesome power. "Why would such a being attend a school?"

Lord Akashiya sighed. "It's complicated." He gave her a rough idea of the circumstances.

"A human containing a Demon Lord? Oh me, oh my I did not know such a thing was possible."

"It would not be possible for an ordinary human," Lord Akashiya confirmed. "Ninja are border beings similar to witches. One of their master spell casters was able to trap the Demon Lord Kyuubi into

one. That individual has access to the Kyuubi's power, but lacks full mastery of it."

"Oh me, oh my I would say so if he accidentally annihilated an entire village. Still," her voice heartened a bit as her interest rose.

"Possessing that sort of power even with imperfect control is a... *frightening* proposition."

Lord Akashiya nodded. "Just so, which is why I offered to send you to the academy to act as his instructor in mastering that power, and as his watchdog. The Chairman has declined my offer, he insists that there is no danger of the seal unraveling and wants him to be treated as an ordinary student. I am... concerned, but I will trust eh Chairman's judgment in this matter." Her father momentarily took on a faraway look. "I just hope Moka will be safe, that's all."

*Typical! His main thought would be about **her** !* Ria had to keep from snarling. Her immediate wish was that this container's seal would unravel and that the demon lord would make a meal of the student body there. *Especially* Moka! But if the Chairman felt it was safe she doubted there was any chance of that happening.

Ria laughed at her amazing good fortune at finding a girl with an item like the Lilith Mirror who hadn't even known what she'd been holding! No one could possibly know or even guess that she'd had access to it. Which meant that when the demon Kyuubi went on a rampage she would be totally innocent in her father's eyes.

I wonder what Moka will taste like? Like chicken I suppose.

The servants who welcomed her back looked startled at her sudden gales of laughter.

The Next Morning

"A mirror?" Naruto said to himself. "Who would send me a mirror?"

Curious he held it up and looked into it. He saw his own face smiling back. He was going to meet Kurumu again; this was going to be a fun day.

And as he looked into the mirror he saw the left half of his face begin to change...

Without warning he found himself inside his own mind. In a dank and filthy sewer. He'd visited this place many times. The last when he had asked for the power to destroy Sasuke and avenge Sakura.

As always he was standing before a set of iron bars with a single paper seal. Behind the bars a pair of monstrous fox like eyes opened and long set of sharpened canines appeared. And as he stood there watching the paper seal simply fell away and fluttered down into the sewer water. A single claw reached out and threw open the iron gate.

" **Free!**" The Kyuubi's voice mocked.

As quickly as he had gone he came back. He was in his room staring at the mirror he was holding. The right side of the face he saw was still his. The left side was a grinning fox with red fur and a murderous look in its single slanted eye. Inside himself he could feel the fox stirring and coming awake. He didn't know what had happened, but he did know that the fox's mind and personality were trying to take him over. He also knew that he would not be able to hold out long. No matter how he fought against it he could sense the fox trying to overwhelm him.

The mirror fell to the floor with a clatter. His right hand grabbed a kunai and he tried to stab himself in the throat. It was the only way... the only way to protect Kurumu and the others. But his left hand which was now a claw covered in red fur grabbed his wrist and stopped him.

Try as he might he could not kill himself.

I won't let Kurumu be hurt! No matter what! He'd seen one girl he cared for die; he wouldn't let it happen again. He couldn't hold out for very long. If he couldn't kill himself there was only one other thing he could do to protect the people here.

Outside the dorm were bike racks where people kept their bikes. He managed to keep enough control over his body to tear the chain from one and head as fast as he could down the main road towards a tunnel. Among the other things Kuyou had shown him was the simple incantation needed to turn a tunnel into a dimensional gateway. He hadn't used it yet and didn't know how to control where the gate would take him, but as long as it was far away from Youkai and Kurumu that would be enough.

Quickly using the spell he pedaled into the tunnel and was engulfed in bizarre and flashing lights. He huffed and pumped his legs as hard as he could, he could sense a mounting desire for blood starting to consume him. Images of buildings being crushed beneath his paws and of humans running from him in terror flashed through his mind. He could taste the scent of ashes mixed with human terror and felt his heart beat rising and his appetite sharpening. Bit by bit his humanity was being stripped away.

At last, mercifully, the end of the tunnel approached. He prayed that where ever he was he was a long way from Youkai. As he exited the tunnel he was thrown into the real world again. He was startled to see he was on a huge paved highway with metal machines like the 'bus' only these were much small and seemed to only carry one or a handful of people at a time. On all sides were buildings that dwarfed even the Hokage Tower. Seemingly made of glass and metal they stretched up into the sky. There were green and white signs over the road and he made out the word, 'Tokyo.' He had no idea where this 'Tokyo' was, but it was obvious he'd arrived in a huge city.

He tried to turn around and go back in the tunnel, but the bike tipped over and fell. His whole body began to shake as he lost control of it. His human side was drowning, and after a last desperate thrashing was gone.

A couple cars came to a screeching halt at what looked like an accident with a bike. A man was just starting to roll down his window when the biker jumped to his feet and let loose a monstrous howl. The poor man had a clear view and saw that it wasn't a person at all but some kind of real life monster. As he watched a sickly red mass started to flow out and surround the creature.

That was all the motorist saw before slamming down the accelerator and racing away as fast as he could. In the rear view mirror he saw something begin to grow. He was already on his cell phone calling the police about the 'monster on the highway.' His was the first call but it would not be the last.

In his office the Chairman had a television with satellite access to all the world's available broadcasts. He watched grimly the image of a gigantic fox with eight tails and without skin or fur destroying city of Tokyo. He couldn't help but be reminded of the old cheesy Godzilla movies where Tokyo always got smashed. Indeed the only things missing were the little toy tanks and jets trying to shoot at it.

But this was no cheesy movie production as the terrified voices of the news crews made clear. This was actually happening, and these images were going out to the entire world. From this day on everyone would believe in monsters.

For a man who had believed in coexistence and dreamed of a day when humans and monsters might truly live together in peace this was the worst possible outcome.

Hiatus

Hello everyone. This is to inform all my readers that I am placing all my stories on hiatus until at **least** the end of the year. I am very sorry but I have no real choice. I am a senior accounting student at the University of South Florida and am gearing up for my finals and trying to graduate with my BA. After which I have lots of other things I need to deal with, not least of which is trying to find a good job in this economy.

I absolutely **love** writing. I love reading your reviews and messages, except when they smell of napalm of course. And while I write for myself please be assured I have always been amazed and honored to see so many people putting my stories on their favorites and alert lists. It has been a very great pleasure writing all these stories, and it has made me extremely happy to know how many of you honestly enjoyed what I wrote.

I thank you all.

But it's because I love writing so much that I have to stop for awhile. My writing has become my addiction and my keyboard my escape from the world's problems. So I need to walk away for awhile and put all my energies and time into real life problems.

I still plan on coming back as I love writing too much to ever stop for good and I don't want to leave my stories unfinished. This is not goodbye, just so long for now.

LOTLOF

All hope

Through the vast city of Tokyo the great and terrible Kyuubi roared in sheer delight. The air was sweet with the delicious and mouthwatering scent of human terror. It mixed well with the smoke and ash that also filled the air. His tails slashed out leveling entire city blocks. His mouth split open and fire pour out engulfing the glass and steel skyscrapers. He delighted in seeing them twist and melt like pieces of wax tossed into a blaze. After so long being a prisoner he was freed again for the second time and giving free reign to the too long suppressed urge to destroy.

Throughout the city there was confusion and panic. Many of them could not accept what they were seeing. Many saw it as a sign that the apocalypse had come. Many did not try or want to understand, focusing only on their desperate attempt at flight. Terror was the only thing real now.

Both the Kyuubi and the human beings doing all they could to escape failed to notice as three portals of light appeared above them in the sky. Three figures rode on the backs of impossible flying creatures; a giant winged cat, a griffin, and a golden dragon. The beings riding their mounts were the three Hades Lords, the most powerful masters of arcane magic and seals. Each of them began creating part of a magical spell of last resort; the ***eximius mutatio animadverto***.

Around each one of them runes and supernatural symbols came into being. Drawn in bright pure light they formed and began to fill the sky above Tokyo.

The Kyuubi felt it, the immense power being drawn about him. Too late he looked up and saw what was being written there. He howled in impotent fury. He could see that he was about to be trapped once again.

When the last symbol was in place the three Hades Lords drew together.

"Are you truly willing to do this?" The Elder Vampire Lord Akashiya asked from the back of his griffin.

"There is no choice," the Chairman said calmly. "The rupture is too great to be repaired any other way."

Dongfang Bubai, founder of the Wong crime family and most knowledgeable among them in seals stood upon the back of his dragon. He was slowly shaking his head. "You understand the cost of doing this?"

"I do," the Chairman replied. He was resigned to it. "I have always believed that coexistence is the only path that offers any hope for the future. We must guard the peace between human and monster no matter what the price."

"You will be avenged," Lord Akashiya promised. "The one responsible will be executed I promise you."

"No," the Chairman said. "I do not know how this happened but I ask that Naruto be spared."

"Spared?" Bubai replied startled. "You must know that is impossible! Even if we wished to be merciful it is out of the question!"

Akashiya nodded his agreement. "Regardless of the circumstances we cannot risk allowing this to happen again."

"There is a way," the Chairman stated. "Confine him to the realm of Hades."

"Ah! Now I see," Bubai nodded his approval. "This is no act of mercy, you want to punish him. To make him suffer for as long as possible."

"No, I honestly hope that there will be some way to exonerate the boy." The Chairman said. "So long as he lives there is at least a

chance of that."

"If you wish him imprisoned in that realm rather than killed we will accede to that desire," Lord Akashiya said. "However you know that *no one* returns from that place. It is impossible."

The Chairman had a faint smile. "When my friend Jiraiya sent him to me he warned me that Naruto had a habit of making eh impossible happen. Perhaps he will find a way, perhaps some evidence will exonerate him. In any case I owe it to Jiraiya to grant him at least that much of a chance."

"As you wish," Akashiya said. Bubai nodded his assent.

"Thank you, now you should get clear as I cast the spell."

The other two departed as the Chairman began his chanting. As he spoke the final trigger words to the ***eximius mutatio animadverto*** he felt the energies all around d him start to fill his body to bursting. All around the glowing incantation a vast circle began to form and twelve lines of energy drew towards the exact center where he was. Novices always liked to imagine wielding such incredible power. They never understood the hidden price such power always demanded. This was quite literally that power of a god; it would alter reality, erase memories, change the world and do it permanently. He dearly wished it were possible to bring back all the innocents that had been killed. Alas that would have required a real god. This at least would repair the worst of the damage and keep alive his dreams for a peaceful world. He hoped Jiraiya would understand that he had no choice and that what he'd done was the only way to keep his apprentice alive.

As he spoke the final word of the spell the circle was completed and the twelve lines converged. His body filled with energy and he cried out as he was consumed by it. The price for using this ultimate power was the spell caster's life.

The sky tore open revealing only the spell as it blazed brighter than the sun and enveloped the Kyuubi, the city, and all below.

A harried Japanese reporter was giving commentary to the shaky images coming in from a helicopter above Tokyo. "As you can see much of Tokyo is in ruins following the devastating and unexpected earthquake. Seismologists report it was recorded as an 8.8 on the Richter scale, the most violent earthquake to ever strike Japan. Early estimates place the death toll as high as 100,000, though that number is likely to increase. Over five million are expected to be left homeless. The Japanese government has declared a state of emergency. Other nations have already begun to pledge aid including..."

The voice and image cut off as the TV was shut off.

"Well at least that was successful," Lord Akashiya said.

"Such a pointless waste," Dongfang Bubai said. "He was a great man."

Lord Akashiya agreed with him, the death of the Chairman was a huge tragedy.

Neither Hades Lord gave the dead humans a thought. They would not realize monsters really did exist and would not begin seeking them out. That was as far as either of them worried about the humans.

"The school will have to be shut down for a time," Lord Akashiya said. "At least until we can find a suitable replacement."

"That will certainly be difficult," Bubai said. "Tell me something, do you think he was serious about hoping the boy would eventually be freed? Or do you feel he just wanted him to suffer as much as possible?"

"If he wanted him to suffer he could have just said so, it's not as if either of us would have objected."

"True."

"In any case it hardly matters, no one ever leaves Hades once they are sent there. For all intents and purposes he may as well be dead."

"Tell me," Bubai asked curiously. "Would you consent to freeing him if he were somehow proven innocent?"

"Possibly," Akashiya answered. "If his power could be safely controlled."

"It would likely require the powers of a Hades Lord to free someone from that place."

"If it were even possible."

Eleven o'clock came and went without Naruto showing up as they'd agreed. Kurumu waited a whole half hour before going to his apartment to look for him. When she saw his door open she had a very bad feeling.

"Naruto? Naruto are you in here?" She stepped inside and looked about. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Certainly there was no sign of a fight or a break in.

There was also no mirror lying anywhere on the floor.

When Naruto finally came to he was lying on his back. His head was filled with hazy half remembered images of a city with glass and metal and moving machines. He also recalled finding that mirror and losing control of himself.

Opening his eyes he looked up into a blood red sky. As he slowly got to his feet he saw he was in the middle of a desolate and lifeless landscape. The earth here was blackened for miles around. He appeared to be in the middle of a vast wasteland.

The only sign that anyone else might be here was an obelisk near where he'd woken. It was about twenty feet tall and had a message carved into all four sides.

' Give up all hope ye who enter this place.'